

ALAN WOLFE ON FACTS, FEELINGS, AND RACE

SEPTEMBER 29, 1997 • \$2.95

THE NEW REPUBLIC

James Wood: Virginia Woolf Unveiled • The Illiberal NEA

Failing Haiti

American Illusions Meet Caribbean Reality

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Theodore Waitt

*Gateway 2000, North Sioux City, SD.
34. Married, 4 children.*

Talked out of joining family cattle business. By father. Left college senior year to start computer mail order business in farmhouse. With \$10,000 start-up loan secured by grandmother's CD.

"Everybody was heading to Silicon Valley. So I picked a cornfield."

Cofounded Gateway 2000 with partner, Mike Hammond. 1985. Direct-market PC seller and manufacturer based in South Dakota. First year revenues \$100,000. Explosive growth due to low costs, fast service. Expanded overseas, 1993. Marketing coup: chose Holstein as company mascot.

"It was either the family cow or the family dog. 'Bunky' lost."

1996 revenues: \$5 billion.

Started reading Forbes as a student at the University of Iowa in 1984.

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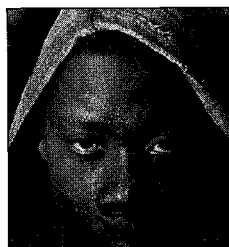
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WASHINGTON, D.C.
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CORRESPONDENCE

Separate beds

To the editors:

As one who's done polling and consulting in both New York and Los Angeles, I read Peter Beinart's "New Bedfellows" (August 11 & 18) with interest. Beinart is correct that both Jews and Latinos vote alike and that both groups have increasingly less in common with African Americans. But they vote Democratic for different reasons: Jews because of cultural issues and Latinos because of immigrant rights and economics. It is way too soon to say that these two groups are forming an alliance. Their recent voting similarity may just be a coincidence. And at any rate this "emerging coalition" will face a severe test in 2001 when Jewish and Latino candidates face off in the mayoral elections of New York and Los Angeles.

PAT REDDY

Santa Monica, California

Cultural offense

To the editors:

Margaret Talbot's article, "Baghdad on the Plains" (August 11 & 18), is a good example of why the dialogue about multiculturalism has become so distorted.

A quote attributed to me concerning a Chinese immigrant's use of the "cultural defense" in a 1989 New York case is erroneous, and I would have corrected it if Talbot or any fact checkers had called.

The quote had to do with the case of Dong Lu Chen, who justified the killing of his adulterous wife by claiming that, in China, men were expected to be enraged over a wife's infidelity. This bizarre stereotype of Chinese law and culture angered many groups, including mine, and I said so at the time. To set the record straight, this was my quote, reported correctly in an April 18, 1989, Associated Press wire story: "There's just no basis for a judge to give this kind of sentence [18 months' jail time and five years' probation] based on a culture. There is a role for cultural considerations in some instances, but not in a case where a man has killed his wife."

Three years later, my comments were picked up and distorted by a conservative *American Spectator* columnist, who wrote a piece based on a speech she gave to the Heritage Foundation attacking "political correctness" and "radical multiculturalists." The mischaracteriza-

tions of my remarks neatly fit the theories of a Duke University law professor, who then attacked me in a *Columbia Law Review* article that was published despite my objections to numerous inaccuracies. Now, this law review article has apparently caught Margaret Talbot's eye, and she has used it to buttress her position at my expense.

The sad result of all this obfuscation is that on the tenth anniversary of this brutal killing of Jian Wan Chen, the case is being used to launch a wholesale attack on multiculturalism. Instead, it should be a stark reminder that false cultural stereotypes must never be used to excuse illegal behavior.

MARGARET FUNG

Asian American Legal Defense
and Education Fund
New York, New York

To the editors:

I thoroughly enjoyed Margaret Talbot's article, "Baghdad on the Plains." As an immigrant from Korea to a small farming town in Illinois, I took interest in reading the very thoughtful and balanced article about multiculturalism in the '90s.

The bottom line I took from her article, and I believe it was her point, is that if we (meaning immigrants) want to become Americans we should learn to adapt to the laws of the land no matter what our old customs are.

W.C. LEE

Cambridge, Massachusetts

Sex, lies and videotape

To the editors:

I want to thank Martha Nussbaum for her scrupulous and generous review of my book, *Life and Death* ("Rage and Reason," August 11 & 18).

It is wrong, however, for her to extrapolate my views on justice from *Mercy*, which is a work of fiction about the experience of being raped.

I do not believe that the guilt or innocence of individual men is irrelevant; nor do I believe in punishing the innocent by legal or extra-legal means.

But Ms. Nussbaum may be right about my bad character: I have developed real empathy for poor, misunderstood Robespierre.

ANDREA DWORKIN

New York, New York

To the editors:

Martha Nussbaum's thoughtful and serious review of Andrea Dworkin's *Life and Death: Unapologetic Writings on the Continuing War Against Women* was a welcome respite from the all-too-common, blind Dworkin-bashing one

has come to expect from reviewers. Yet Nussbaum, whose philosophical writings evidence considerable familiarity with classical thought, surprisingly echoes Dworkin's misguided belief that the sexual degradation and dehumanization of women may stem from "the images of women, in the media, in advertising and, in many cases, in pornography."

Female inequality, and the sexual abuse that inevitably accompanies it, long predates the modern era marked by these means of conveying images and ideas. Women were already the second sex in ancient Athens, and Zeus raped Europa even though *Hustler* was unavailable. The age of mass media is also the one in which women gained the rights to vote and own property, dismantled the marital rape exemption and entered the "public" sphere of the market en masse. To blame accessible porn and the mass media for the objectified plight of women flies in the face of our historical experience.

ADAM WINKLER

Los Angeles, California

To the editors:

Martha C. Nussbaum makes several errors in discussing the MacKinnon/Dworkin "civil rights" anti-pornography law that was passed in Indianapolis in 1984. As the counsel for the booksellers, publishers and librarians who successfully challenged the Indianapolis law, I would like to draw these to your attention.

Nussbaum says that Dworkin and MacKinnon never called for the censorship of pornographic material; and that their ordinance was not available to all women, but only to actresses who are harmed while making pornographic films and battered women who can show that pornographic material caused the violence against them. She also says that the ordinance enjoyed "brief success" before being struck down by a federal appeals court.

In fact, none of the judges who reviewed the Indianapolis ordinance accepted any of the rationalizations that Dworkin and MacKinnon offered in defense of their attack on free speech. In the U.S. District Court, Judge Sarah Evans Barker struck down the ordinance on the day it was to become effective. The three judges on the Court of Appeals and a majority of the U.S. Supreme Court all found the ordinance to be unconstitutional.

The Indianapolis law was struck down because it would have resulted in the viewpoint-based censorship of a wide range of works with sexual content that are protected by the First Amendment as having serious literary, artistic, politi-

cal or scientific value. The judges saw no difference between a civil statute enjoining the sale of constitutionally protected material and a ban enforced with criminal penalties. Neither were they convinced by claims that only women who had suffered physical injuries as a result of "pornography" would bring claims. Under the ordinance, any woman who was offended by a sexually frank book, magazine, movie or video could have asked a court to enjoin the sale of the offending material. The threat of being dragged into court would have had an immediate and dramatic chilling effect on publishers, booksellers, librarians and other producers and distributors of First Amendment-protected material.

If anyone is still wondering what happens when well-intentioned exceptions are made to the First Amendment, they need only look at Oklahoma City where the authorities have banned the Academy Award-winning film *The Tin Drum*, on the grounds that it is child pornography.

MICHAEL A. BAMBERGER
New York, New York

Martha C. Nussbaum replies:

Adam Winkler misunderstands me. I do not hold that the subordination of women requires pornography. I stressed that it probably has many sources, some of them economic. But violent pornographic images are likely to be among the sources; and ancient Athens did contain such images.

I did not, as Michael A. Bamberger states, describe the ordinance as restricted to actresses and battered women. I said the plaintiffs were "envisaged" by its framers as coming mainly from those groups. The "brief success" was, of course, the passage of the ordinance by the Indianapolis city council. The ordinance does not permit censorship; it permits damage actions, an important distinction of which Judge Easterbrook was well aware. Bamberger's phrase, "exceptions to the First Amendment," suggests that he doesn't know that there is a debate about what forms of speech that amendment protects. As I pointed out, many forms of speech, including libel, perjury, threats, bribery, unlicensed medical advice and some forms of commercial advertising are not currently protected. Should violent pornography be treated like these cases or like core cases of protected speech? That is the hard question that Bamberger's simple slogan does not help answer.

To Andrea Dworkin, whom I have never met, I can only say that Robespierre has always fascinated me, too. I wrote a five-act tragedy about him at the

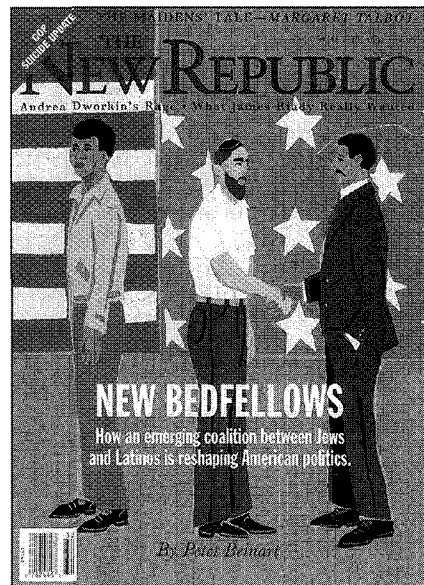
age of 16, while I was also working in Barry Goldwater's campaign, as a dedicated young libertarian.

Teamster style

To the editors:

I'm sorry to see your magazine accusing our union's reform president, Ron Carey, of a "complete lack of style" (Jeffrey Goldberg, "Cash and Carey," August 11 & 18). I'm not sure what you mean by that, except that you don't seem to think too highly of working-class leaders.

The corrupt leaders we expelled when we elected Ron Carey had lots of "style." They rode around in fancy limos. They played golf at some of the fanciest



resorts. They lived the high life, all paid for by the members' dues, including mine for thirty-six years.

In our Local Union, Ron Carey helped members like me get rid of the mob and the constant collusion between our officials and the companies we work for. He helped us turn our union into a strong and honest voice for working families. That's the "style" of leader we've wanted for a long time.

JOHN B. MCCORMICK
Teamsters Local Union 705
Chicago, Illinois

To the editors:

For those of us who have followed twenty years of effort by rank-and-file Teamster members to reform their union, your article "Cash and Carey" had an Alice-in-Wonderland quality to it.

The first nineteen paragraphs of your twenty-one paragraph commentary insinuate, without proof, that campaign

consultants for Teamsters President Ron Carey are somehow being shielded from a corruption investigation by the Clinton administration because the Democrats get political donations from the union. In paragraph twenty, however, the article finally concedes that "no evidence has emerged" that such a scheme happened and that the possibility "seems at this point remote" and "unlikely." But then—why let the facts interfere with a good conspiracy theory?

Let's look at some of the facts that were left out. First of all, two of the three people who make up the court-appointed panel that investigates corruption in the Teamsters are Republicans. It's hard to imagine them engaging in a conspiracy to channel money to Democrats.

Second, most unions support Democrats because the policies of the GOP are so aggressively anti-labor. The real scandal is not that Carey supports Democrats, but that the Teamsters under his old-guard predecessors supported union-busters like Ronald Reagan and George Bush.

Finally, you ignored Carey's record since he won office in 1991. His reform team has established temporary trusteeships at more than seventy Teamsters locals to stop mob influence, misuse of members' dues and abuse of members' democratic rights. The union has challenged big corporations' efforts to shift to a "throwaway" workforce with low-paid, part-time jobs without pensions or health coverage. The new leaders of the Teamsters made possible the election of John Sweeney and his new activist team that is reviving the nation's labor federation and turning the Teamsters into an organization that is growing again.

This is a record that THE NEW REPUBLIC ought to applaud, even if it would interfere with a preconceived story.

MICHAEL J. GOLDBERG
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Jeffrey Goldberg replies:

Let me simply point Messrs. McCormick and Goldberg to the decision of the federal monitor in the Teamster matter, who in late August overturned Ron Carey's election victory after finding evidence of a massive money-laundering conspiracy conducted on Carey's behalf by his close aides and supporters. I will also note that Judge Lacey and former FBI Director Webster failed utterly to prevent this conspiracy from taking place. Finally, let me note that the Justice Department is investigating credible allegations that the Democrats improperly directed donations to Carey's campaign fund.



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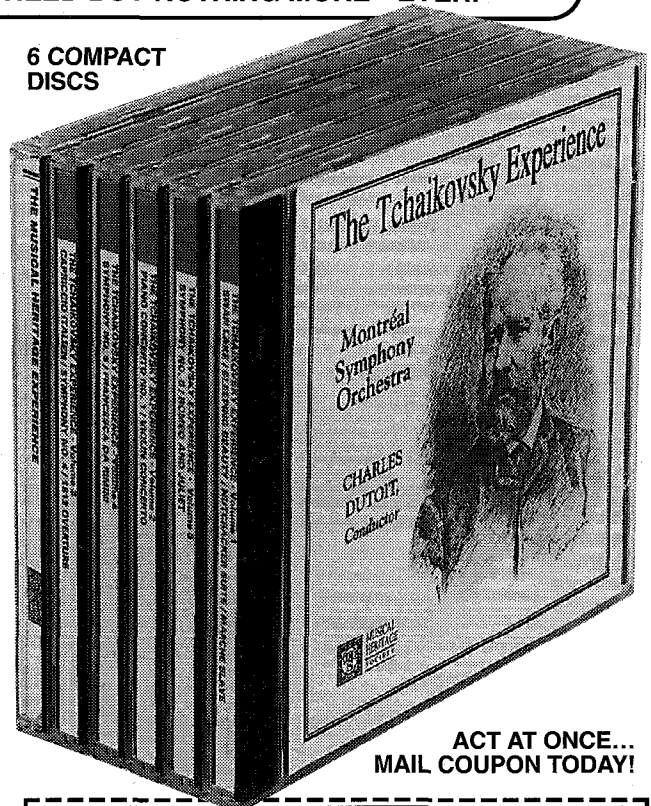
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GETTING TESTY

Six years ago, then-President George Bush announced his support for national education standards—a single, nationwide set of criteria to gauge the performance of students and schools. Congressional Democrats shot down the plan. New tests, they argued, would serve only to stigmatize poor performance.

TNR supported Bush's proposal in 1991, and we support the virtually identical national testing plan President Clinton proposed in this year's State of the Union address. But now, lo and behold, it's the Republicans who are lining up against the idea. Lamar Alexander, who led the fight for national performance tests as Bush's education secretary, now fulminates against them. Alexander's confusion seems to have permeated his party. Chester Finn, a former assistant secretary of education under President Reagan who serves as the GOP's éminence grise on the topic, first issued a ringing endorsement of Clinton's plan—"better than Bush's"—then later announced his modified, updated view that "the president's proposal would do more harm than good."

Confused? So, obviously, are the Republicans. Their excuses for opposing fourth-grade reading tests and eighth-grade math tests seem awfully, well, excuse-like. The tests would cost virtually nothing—\$15 million a year—but William Goodling, chairman of the House Education Committee, vaguely proposes to spend the money instead on "the classroom." New federal pencil boxes for every second grader!

House Speaker Newt Gingrich says that instead Clinton "ought to be focusing on local parents, local students and local teachers," but it's hard to understand what this phrase even means. There is no such thing as a parent, student or teacher who isn't local, since everyone resides in a locality. If Gingrich wants all initiatives to well up from the grass-roots, then President Clinton can't very well "focus" on them, since everything he proposes is by definition a national initiative. If Gingrich is trying to suggest that Clinton should not subject local government to federal regulation, his objection is groundless. Any school or state would have the right to opt out of the tests.

Perhaps the underlying reason for Republican opposition is that national tests will nationalize the debate over education. Currently, parents have no objective measure by which to compare the performance of their

child's school district with any other. National standards would allow for inter-district comparisons, thus empowering parents to question the backward and inefficient practices employed by many local school boards. This in turn would expose conservatism's local control fetish. Critics of public education—those who wish to replace it with vouchers, rather than those who wish to improve it—point to the superior educational performance of foreign schools, while failing to acknowledge that all other major industrial countries have centralized, nationally run public school systems.

Of course, should national testing spark a movement for real reform, conservatives are not the only ones who would be threatened. Many administrators and teachers from poor, low-performing school districts resist national standards. Diagnosing the problem, they argue, is not a substitute for treating it. True. But the public will never face up to public education's inequalities and inadequacies until the consequences of those inequalities are laid out in hard numbers. National testing would not only spur reform, it would also serve as an essential condition of reform. Without testing, there's no way to know if reform is actually working.

Clinton's plan, then, has no appreciable downside and could even be a first step toward transforming the political climate on education. But the promise of reform is not the same thing as reform, and for this reason Clinton's education plan, taken as a whole, doesn't quite warrant the lyrical rhetoric with which the president has surrounded it. After all, education was supposed to be the cornerstone of Clinton's second term. But, in pursuit of a budget deal with the Republicans, he bargained away his highly touted plan to spend \$5 billion renovating dilapidated, inner-city schools.

The one portion of his education package that he refused to negotiate—tax deductions and credits for college tuition—is a transparent political bribe and a grossly inefficient method of increasing access to college. That Clinton put a higher priority on tax pork for the middle class than on far cheaper, and more urgent, aid for the truly needy belies his grandiose pronouncements. The only thing worse than Clinton's settling for modest reform is the Republicans' obtuse resistance to modest reform in education. •



NOTEBOOK

ET, TU?: It isn't easy being a Republican homophobe. First, former California Congressman Bob Dornan's longtime chief of staff, Brian O'Leary Bennett, came out to his boss—a man who had called gays “sodomites,” “lesbian spear chuckers” and child molesters. Now comes news that Florida Representative Charles Canady, who cosponsored the Defense of Marriage Act, has received an equal shocker from his chief of staff. Tracey St. Pierre informed Canady over the August recess that she was, yes, a lesbian. If that was not enough to shatter the congressman's faith in the moral foundations of America, she also explained that she was quitting to lobby for the nation's largest gay political group. Afterwards, a nervous Republican staffer on the Hill fretted to TNR: “Everybody's looking at everybody else waiting for the next bomb.” We can't wait.

LOST IN SPACE: During a recent visit to the Mars Pathfinder Mission Control Center in Pasadena, California, Texas Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, a member of the Space and Aeronautics Subcommittee, made her own unexpected discovery, according to *The Hill* newspaper. Did Pathfinder manage to snap any pictures of the American flag planted by Astronaut Neil Armstrong in 1969? she asked mission controllers. Obviously, men are from Mars, and this congresswoman is from the moon.

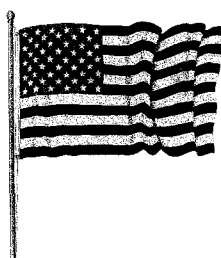
PROSECUTORIAL INDISCRETION: As Madeleine Albright left for the Middle East last week, her message was clear: you can't base a peace process on the appeasement of terrorists. Well, at least not those terrorists. The day Albright left, Attorney General Janet Reno announced that, under pressure from the State Department, she was suspending the deportation to Britain of six convicted IRA terrorists. The decision—surprise—had a wee bit to do with pressure from pandering politicians. Representative Tom Manton from Queens called the men—one helped set up an ambush in which a policeman was shot, another allegedly blew up a police station—“freedom fighters.” Congressman Peter King from Long Island likened the six to Nelson Mandela. But it would be wrong to ascribe the Clinton administration's decision entirely to ethnic politics. Sanctuary for the men in America, said the Secretary of State, “could contribute to the peace process.”

RIGHTS AND IRRESPONSIBILITIES: You've probably heard that many states are spending more money on services to help move welfare recipients off the dole. What you haven't heard, though, is that a few states are doing this by penalizing another deserving group—the working poor. According to a new survey by Margy

Waller of the Progressive Policy Institute, several states have cut assistance for the working poor while channeling more money to welfare recipients. The idea behind welfare reform—the very good idea—was to prod states into creating a “seamless web of social services” for low-income Americans. Now it looks like some states pursued an easier strategy, shuffling funds from one group of poor people to another—which is particularly perverse since most states have money to spare. “If Margy wants to come back and ask for a tax increase . . . she can do that,” harrumphs the deputy director of Ohio's Department of Human Services, whose state this year boasts a \$1 billion budget *surplus*. He notes—rightly—that Ohio has spent money on other worthy initiatives, such as transportation assistance, but the working poor still lose out in the end. Wasn't this the problem we set out to fix in the first place?

FIRST IN THEIR CLASS: We thought affirmative action had long since reached its *reductio ad absurdum*. Apparently not. The University of Illinois at Chicago, it turns out, has given minority students preferences not only in the admissions process, but in course selection as well. Nearly 4,000 minority students last spring were allowed to enroll early, effectively taking seats from other classmates. The policy was crafted two decades ago to help disabled students and athletes with scheduling conflicts, but it gradually devolved into a boondoggle. According to *The Chicago Tribune*, anywhere from 70 to 93 percent of minority students (African Americans, Native Americans and Hispanics) once qualified for the preference. Now, facing both a federal class-action lawsuit and negative press, Chancellor David Broski says the policy will return to its original mission of helping disabled students and overburdened athletes. Yet university students seeking preferences may not have much to worry about. The guidelines still include a category for those “differentially qualified” students who were admitted under less stringent standards. Any takers?

NOTE TO READERS: As you may have learned from the newspapers, with this issue Charles Lane succeeds Michael Kelly as editor. Lane first came to TNR fresh out of college in 1983. Hendrik Hertzberg was editor at the time and Lane apprenticed closely with him. Then, when Michael Kinsley sat at the editor's desk, he designated Lane to work with him as the magazine's principal editorial writer. After going to *Newsweek* as its Central American correspondent during the Nicaraguan civil war and subsequently serving as that magazine's Berlin bureau chief in the aftermath of the demise of communism, Lane was summoned back to Washington by then-Editor Andrew Sullivan to be TNR's lead foreign-policy analyst. So Lane represents continuity with the deepest traditions of this journal: political independence, intellectual seriousness, good writing and decency toward those with whom one disagrees. —*Martin Peretz* •



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DÉJÀ COUP II

By Sandy Hume

Moments after the Republicans' marathon make-up session in the Capitol basement on July 23, renegade Matt Salmon, an Arizona congressman, said of Speaker Newt Gingrich, the man he had been trying to oust only a few days earlier: "I believe that we're all willing to live with each other right now." Oklahoma Congressman Tom Coburn, another rebel, proclaimed: "We have had a good healing." And Gingrich, for his part, strolled out of the meeting and declared triumphantly, "It's over."

Well, not exactly. Despite the gushing calls for unity and despite the conventional wisdom that Gingrich has emerged from the uprising stronger than ever, several Republican renegades are already considering the unthinkable: a second coup. "Nobody has lost their desire to see this change—nobody," one renegade told me. "The original group is still strong, still rigorous and still meeting." Though they are publicly circumspect about their intentions, several rebels privately admit they are hoping to oust the Speaker before the 1998 election. "We're going to keep working," said one, "only you all aren't going to know about it this time."

When they re-emerge, the rebels may be stronger than they were last time. They now have a viable successor to the Speaker in New York Congressman Bill Paxon, the popular former head of the National Republican Congressional Committee and the only coup-plotter in the July 23 reconciliation meeting who received a standing ovation. What's more, Gingrich's new sentries—moderate Republicans—are more likely to desert him during the coming campaign. After all, Gingrich's unprecedented unpopularity threatens them more than the rebellious right-wingers in safe districts. Moderate Nancy Johnson, who held her seat in Connecticut by a mere 1,587 votes in 1996, is one example: rather than associate herself too closely with Gingrich, she is now putting out constituent mail that touts her work with President Clinton. (It is Clinton's photo, not Gingrich's, that appears on the mailing.) "You watch these guys who are kissing his ass now," said one renegade. "They'll run for cover when the election comes."

Gingrich has nonetheless staked his future on these brittle allies. After Paxon resigned from the leadership, Gingrich replaced him with James Greenwood, a liberal

Republican from Pennsylvania. The Speaker's kitchen cabinet also consists of such well-known moderates as Christopher Shays, David Hobson and James Walsh. Ironically, the ascension of so many moderates has alienated even non-rebellious conservatives who were expecting Gingrich to heed their calls for a sharp rightward turn after the initial uprising.

Still, the would-be insurgents have their own liabilities. However much the rank and file may have sympathized with the rebels' grievances, the distaste for internecine feuding has grown. "People realize that there are big downsides" to a coup, says Indiana Representative Mark Souder, a former plotter. "A tremendous internal fight could lose us the majority." The renegades may also be without what was once the weapon of choice to sabotage Gingrich—a privileged resolution calling for the Speaker to vacate the chair. A tricky parliamentary maneuver that counts on Democratic support, the resolution ploy used to benefit from the element of surprise. Now, however, Democrats may not vote to oust the Speaker and instead plunge the House into chaos. "The Democrats are ready. Gingrich is ready. The conference is ready. And the media is watching," added Souder. "The risks involved in that type of action are higher than they were before, and they were too high before."



So renegades find themselves waiting for the only thing that can touch off a rebellion: Gingrich's mouth. New York Congressman Peter King, who once called Gingrich "political roadkill," believes Gingrich can stay Speaker if he stays mum. But he added, "If he starts talking about fixing the world's problems, or makes another ridiculous remark like complaining about having to sit in the back of Air Force One, he's in more trouble than ever before."

The rebels may not have to wait long. During the recess, Gingrich lashed out at renegades and at GOP presidential aspirants who criticized the budget deal. His hints at a run for president in 2000 suggest to some members of Congress that his judgment may still be impaired: he has a public approval rating of 18 percent. His White House flirtation has also undermined his claim that he has acknowledged his failings as Speaker and will dedicate himself to getting the House back in order.

So far, he has not followed through with his promise to unclog the House "communications," the organ for establishing and disseminating the party message. He has yet to even replace the communications director. Most telling of all, though, may be Gingrich's plan to return to the nettlesome arena of book deals. Though his latest contract may not trigger the same ethical scrutiny as his previous one did, it is another sign to the rebels that Gingrich is a creature of a powerful, and seemingly uncontrollable, ego. The subject of the book? Leadership.

SANDY HUME is a reporter for *The Hill*.

RE-EDIFICATION

By Michael Z. Wise

Hermann Göring's former Aviation Ministry stretches along an entire block of Berlin's Wilhelmstrasse—the artery of power in imperial and Nazi Germany. Like Hitler at his Reich Chancellery down the street, Göring desired a headquarters that could browbeat anyone in its vicinity. "Whoever approached here felt as if he had been knocked down a peg," writes Günter Grass in his most recent novel. The Chancellery was flattened by the Allies, but as reunified Germany prepares to move its capital from Bonn to Berlin in the next two-and-a-half years, Göring's old headquarters is being readied for a new tenant: the Federal Republic's Finance Ministry.

In restoring Berlin as its capital, Germany has taken on an epic task—the transformation of totalitarian-era buildings into democratic ones. The Labor Ministry will occupy Joseph Goebbels's former Propaganda Ministry. And Germany's Foreign Ministry will awkwardly set up shop in the former Reichsbank, whose design was selected by Hitler and later served as the headquarters of the East German Communist Party. The bank's huge subterranean vault, used to stockpile gold stolen from death camp victims and safeguard the Communists' top-secret documents, will become the Foreign Ministry archives.

There were calls to bulldoze these buildings and erect a new capital from scratch. But financial constraints—the transfer from Bonn is costing some \$14 billion—have obliged Germany to use them. "We can't change history by negating it architecturally," says Building Minister Klaus Töpfer. He has moved his own Berlin offices into East Germany's former State Council Building. "The important thing is the spirit that reigns in a building today and in the future." But Töpfer also says reusing the structures "cannot mean that we retain everything as it came over to us."

The Aviation Ministry and the Reichsbank were prime examples of the Nazi effort to deploy monumental architecture as a propaganda tool. "Our opponents will come to realize it, but above all our followers must know it: our buildings are erected with the aim of strengthening ... authority," Hitler declared. Sixty years later, with Germany's neighbors anxious about renewed dominance from Berlin, the Federal Republic is aware that its return to these buildings will do little to assuage

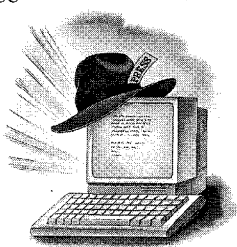
simmering suspicion and resentment. Of course, other governments have adapted buildings of fallen rulers. The British viceroy's palace has become home to India's democracy; Mexico's president sits in a sixteenth-century pile erected by Hernán Cortés. Will time and new occupants also exorcise Berlin's buildings?

So far, the Foreign Ministry is doing its best to put a positive spin on its move into the former Reichsbank. "It's not at all bad for the federal government to constantly be conscious of living and working against the backdrop of a difficult history," says Fritjof von Norden-skjöld, the diplomat overseeing the ministry's move. But a selective appropriation of history is already taking place. "We can occupy this building very easily," senior Finance Ministry official Hans-Michael Meyer-Sebastian tells me as we sit in offices where German officers ordered the bombings of Coventry, Rotterdam and Guernica. "It was a building of the resistance during the Third Reich." He means the Red Orchestra resistance group, which operated covertly until the arrest and execution of its leading members. An exhibit in the lobby hails their courage, but there is no marker on the façade alluding to the building's genesis or the aggression plotted there. A plaque affixed in 1993 recalls only the 1953 workers' uprising crushed by Soviet tanks.

Will the stress on the appealing legacy of resistance obscure the role these buildings played in validating totalitarian rule? Says architectural historian Winfried Nerdinger: "I have always objected when people say, 'Oh, these are merely neoclassical buildings. They are harmless, innocent stones that one can deal with today.' They remain bloodily entangled and one must see them in their entirety or do injustice to history."

The Reichsbank exemplifies this bloody entanglement. It was the first project to get under way after the Nazis came to power in 1933. When Hitler reviewed architectural submissions, he found them all lacking in grandeur and chose another design for a labyrinth of spare classicism with nearly 1,000 rooms. A row of stolid columns stretched across the façade, decorated with a frieze of muscled figures. Swastikas adorned the door-knobs and bellicose eagles were inscribed in the entryway. By the time the building was complete in 1940, Germany was at war. The bank's financial functions were augmented by a new task—storing goods arriving in a steady stream from extermination camps. Its vault rapidly overflowed with plunder, including gold yanked from Jews' teeth, watches, jewelry and spectacle frames.

Andreas Marx, an architectural historian advising the government on the Reichsbank's conversion, is pressing officials to acknowledge the building's history. "There's no sense in lying and afterwards having the Israeli Foreign Minister visit and then learn from some media campaign about all the things that happened there," he says. The Foreign Ministry has agreed to have Marx author an official publication about the bank for distribution to visitors. "It is important for the people who work here to know what happened before them within



these walls," explains von Nordenskjöld. The desire to inform seems to have limits, however. "We will see how far we can, should and must go into details" of the building's history, the diplomat says, adding that there are no plans to document the past with a plaque. "We don't need it. The building speaks for itself."

The structure was bound to create anxiety for the current government. "I was concerned that the image of this building would always appear on television when state visitors arrived," says former Federal Construction Board President Barbara Jakubeit. The Foreign Ministry's need for extra space to house its library and visa department helped resolve the symbolic quandary with architectural sleight of hand. A new competition was held last year, with guidelines stating that the old façade "will be hidden from the public eye" by an extension covering an entire city block fronting the Reichsbank. The competition guidelines emphasized that the ministry's "architectural identity will be determined by the new structure." The winning design features a glass atrium symbolizing official openness.

For the renovation of the former Reichsbank itself, the ministry chose Berlin architect Hans Kolhoff to infuse the somber behemoth with natural light, greenery and color. "This is a very solid building; one has the feeling that it could stand for centuries," Kolhoff says, voicing unabashed admiration for the original design that, minus the Nazi insignia, bears some resemblance to 1930s architecture erected in Washington, Moscow or Rome. Kolhoff hopes the removal of many communist-era renovations will alleviate the building's current gloom. He wants visitors to feel "certain vibrations that should not go as far as to be nervous-making, but here and there should indeed be unsettling."

There will be unsettling "vibrations" at the new Finance Ministry as well. From 1946 to 1949, the Soviet military administration was headquartered there and until 1989, a dozen top East German ministries were located in the complex. It was later occupied by the Treuhandanstalt, which privatized the East's state enterprises. All these entities sought to modify the building in their own image. None had much luck in mellowing its martial feel. This time the limestone façade is being cleansed of black grime. But landmark authorities thwarted a total "white-wash" that would have eliminated all signs of wartime damage. Inside, the ballroom where Nazis once strode the marble floor will become a conference room with sleek Charles Eames chairs. The architect overseeing the makeover, Wolfgang Keilholz, calls the changes "an injection of a new philosophy." He acknowledges that integrating these burdensome structures into a democratic capital, as well as conveying their true history, will test Germany's character in ways both aesthetic and political. "We are trying to start this transformation," says Keilholz. "The user will have to finish it."

MICHAEL Z. WISE is the author of the forthcoming *Capital Dilemma: Germany's Search for a New Architecture of Democracy* (Princeton Architectural Press).

TAOS COUNTY POSTCARD

WASHED OUT

By Florence Williams

It's been raining here for weeks, giving new meaning to the term "monsoon season." Hillsides have deflated, culverts have collapsed and ditches are oozing mud. The weather has had the most devastating effect, however, on an unexpected crowd: the town's alternative, mostly mud-dwelling homeowners. Their solar-electric systems are on the fritz and their remote dirt roads have washed out.

"Don't even try to visit us," grumbles Andy Sierra, who lives in a "republic" of houses made of dirt-filled tires. "You'll never get up the road." His neighbors and fellow earth-dwellers Ken Anderson and Pam Freund bump into town in their Toyota 4-Runner, once cherry-colored but now frosted with a dense layer of brown mud. The young architects are part of a horde of alternative housing consumers and builders who have dug into northern New Mexico's hillsides during recent years.

Not only is their road in shambles, but they are deeply disillusioned with their land developer-cum-guru Michael Reynolds. An architect, Reynolds is the trademark-holder and chief proselytizer of hundreds of local Earthships: half-buried houses made from recycled tires, tin cans, glass and concrete. Sun-powered and energy efficient, they are designed to be as pure and perfect as Mother Nature herself and completely free of electrical power, phone lines or even maintained roads. Resembling bunkers, but nearly as expensive as conventional homes, with their adobe-style finishes and Southwestern interiors, the dwellings collect rain, channel used household water into banana-tree planters and face south for maximum solar intake.

Anderson and Freund live in the Social Transformation Alternative Republic, one of three communities Reynolds has developed near Taos by selling members the right to build on land he owns. The idea was to turn the land over to the homeowners when the property was 90 percent developed. "But with the road this bad, no one else wants to build up there," says Anderson. Only a dozen homes of an anticipated 100 have been constructed.

Although Anderson and Freund like living in their Earthship, as architects, they prefer a less labor-intensive concept: stucco-covered straw bales. ("Tires are not really the best way to build a house unless you're 19 years old and want 500 square feet of living space," says Freund.) Indeed, straw-bale houses have replaced Earthships here as the latest rage. Stacked like bricks, the bales are easy

to work with, make aesthetically pleasing thick walls and, provided you can keep them dry, offer unsurpassed insulation. Also trendy in Taos among the alternative crowd: rammed-earth houses (made by compressing mud and straw into pre-made forms), foam bricks and houses made of something called humus peat.

But the mass influx of creative, paradise-seeking homeowners has given Dave DiCicco, the director of planning in Taos County, a major migraine. Of 300 building permits the county issued last year, more than half went to "alternative" houses, he says. Not only do unconventional buildings require extra scrutiny from code-enforcement officers, but the free-spirited nature of many builders resists zoning laws. Because so many of the homes are remote, the county has a hard time keeping track of them. DiCicco, who's been at this two years, is particularly riled at Earthship magnate Michael Reynolds, whose feel-good communities amount to what he terms "illegal subdivisions."

In a brief respite between rain and hail, I drive out to visit Reynolds's latest development, the Greater World Community, fifteen minutes northwest of town. A wiry, kinetic 52-year-old with a long, stringy mane of gray hair, Reynolds becomes apoplectic when talk turns to DiCicco's charges. "This is *not* a subdivision because we are not selling land," he says. Rather, he adds, the land will ultimately be held communally—"like a golf club"—by its members. High on the sage-strewn dusty mesa littered with the steel-belted detritus of Earthship construction, the analogy seems a stretch. But Reynolds is mesmerized as he talks about his vision, which is laid out in a bevy of books, pamphlets and videotapes sold on the Internet.

He takes me to the lip of a former gravel quarry where tanned young men with bare midriffs are busy pounding dirt into tires and mixing cement. "This is the seat and core of our operation," he gushes. "We're calling it Lemuria after the cradle of man, the beginning of intelligent life on the planet. We figure this is a whole new cradle of knowledge, right out of a gravel pit. We're going to reclaim it, make it green and people will live here."

Below us in the pit, four tire houses are under construction, despite a stop-work order delivered by the sheriff for Reynolds's failure to comply with subdivision regulations. "We're going to keep going until they come out with the tanks and it becomes like Waco, Texas, and we have a big scene," he says in a lilting Kentucky drawl. "I can see how that stuff happens. In a state that has designated thousands of acres for testing weapons of destruction to humanity, can't we allow 650 acres for testing methods of human survival? I'll go to jail for that. I'll die for that."

Not everyone shares Reynolds's conviction. Among many in the county's large, established Hispanic population, Reynolds is yet another land developer come to "Californicate" their valley. Some locals call Reynolds's Earthships "prairie-dog homes" and "Earthshits." "Rey-

nolds is trying to save Mother Earth and all that," says burrito maker Beverly Armijo, "but he's exploiting the rest of us. If we're forced to abide by regulations, so should he." The populist philosophy behind the new dwellings may have another problem in gaining local acceptance. Says Armijo, it is only the wealthy newcomers who can build adobe-inspired homes while the locals are relegated to trailers.

But the biggest problem may be much more mundane: mud. Most builders incorporate cement into the exterior coating, which adheres poorly to mud bricks, eventually cracking and exposing the bricks to rain. Traditional, straight-mud, sun-dried adobe is easier to repair, but is, of course, not waterproof. The result: melting houses. I got a close-up view of a home in the process of dissolving when I visited Jean-Louis Bourgeois, a former New Yorker, Buddhist, author and architectural historian. The house is boxy, and would seem blandly two-dimensional except for a jolting array of bas-relief gargoyles on the exterior. It is a veritable Parthenon of primordial symbology, including a penis, a plump-breasted female, a labyrinth and various swollen lizards and snakes. Those protrusions have held up surprisingly well, but the eave-less flat roof has exposed the tops of the walls to the rain. Little rivulets of mud are now sliding down the upper portions of the house.

The handmade domicile, which was constructed illegally, without permits or inspections, was recently featured in *House Beautiful*, much to Bourgeois's amusement. A tall, gentle man with a long ponytail and salt-and-pepper beard, Bourgeois believes adobe is a panacea for today's polluted and elitist environments. The muddy material is a comfort for the masses; it breathes, it heats, it cools. Like a Gandhi of adobe, he is determined to decentralize the building industry and bring mud "back to the people."

He wants to see building codes relaxed so that traditional methods of construction are accepted by officials. And he thinks local schools should give credit to students who learn adobe techniques. "Adobe is not a technical issue," he says. "It's a political and cultural issue, and finally, it's a colonial issue. It's about the imposition of American industrial capitalist values on vernacular architecture."

Not surprisingly, Bourgeois scoffs at the idea of glass, rubber and concrete Earthships. "An Earthship feels like a combination greenhouse and root cellar," he says, "neither of which is fit for human habitation."

Meanwhile, Andy Sierra, the tire-home owner who warned me about the road, is relocating into town. "My little girl is starting school next month and no school bus could ever get up here," he says.

"Where can one live after experiencing an Earthship?" I ask.

"In a straw-bale house," he replies. "It's much more convenient."

FLORENCE WILLIAMS is a writer in western Colorado.



ILLIBERAL ARTS

By Jonathan Chait

President Clinton is a paragon of bipartisanship and cooperation, at least when it comes to negotiating with Congress over hundreds of billions of dollars worth of taxes and expenditures. But when the topic is the National Endowment for the Arts, which faces another Republican assassination attempt this month, Clinton turns into a determined, almost Churchillian figure. Though House Republicans have repeatedly voted to abolish the agency, Clinton has refused to meet them halfway. Instead, he boldly demanded a large *increase* in funding, and issued a rare veto threat.

Clinton's steadfastness is not a personal idiosyncrasy. It reflects a broad sense among right-thinking people that the question of federal funding for the arts is a *Kulturkampf* pitting reasonableness and toleration against narrow-minded Philistinism. And since most NEA opponents *are* narrow-minded Philistines, advocates of the Endowment have successfully stigmatized opposition to it as "an intolerant social revolution that will soon engulf us all" (Frank Rich, *The New York Times*).

But you don't have to be Jesse Helms to question the need for the NEA. Despite what Rush Limbaugh says, we liberals don't want to let the government do just *anything*. We definitely don't want to use the government to fund certain activities just because we like them. We only want the state to intervene when necessary to correct clear cases of market failure. What distinguishes liberals from conservatives is a capacity for recognizing where the market has failed and the government must intervene.

The problem is that art is not like most of the public goods that liberals want government to subsidize. Art is not a giant project like a highway or a national park, something so big that individuals have neither the incentive nor the means to build it on their own. Nor is art a good that ought to be universally enjoyed as a matter of entitlement, like education or health care. (Even if your goal is universal access to art, you don't want the NEA, you want art vouchers for the needy. But that would put the government in the cruelly paternalistic position of requiring the poor to spend money on a symphony instead of food.) Rather, art bears a strong resemblance to the sort of goods that liberals are content to leave to the market, like clothing and entertainment. Art can be produced and con-

sumed by small groups or individuals who are willing to pay for it. People are also willing to subsidize it through their own charitable donations. (Yes, the donations are tax-deductible, so there is an implicit government subsidy to art. But the mechanism—a tax deduction enjoyed equally by all other worthy causes—preserves people's right, and duty, to exercise choice over how much, and what kind of, art they want.)

NEA advocates offer three replies. The first is that the agency brings art to remote areas. There is a certain logic here, since the arts outside of large cities have a more difficult time winning philanthropic support. But acting as a kind of arts charity for the geographically deprived is not what the NEA does. A disproportionate share of its grants goes to the East Coast, which needs help the least. Last year, Washington, D.C., got more NEA money than Michigan and Ohio combined.

Furthermore, if spreading art beyond its natural constituents is your rationale for federal arts funding, you don't need the NEA. You could replace it with block grants to the states, with perhaps a disproportionate share of the money going to states lacking strong markets for art. (I know, I know, block grants sound conservative. But that's only because conservatives apply them wantonly to programs that should be nationally uniform, like welfare and health care. Art, by contrast, is legitimately a matter of local and regional taste.) In any case, the block grant idea runs into the same conceptual snag as art vouchers: small, remote towns suffer from a number of deprivations—along with corresponding advantages—vis-à-vis big cities. If we're going to help regionally disadvantaged areas, why dictate that they spend the money on ballet rather than something like schools?

Arts advocates have a second argument: the NEA supports, or should support, the great art that fails to win appreciation in its time. But why is government more capable than the marketplace of spotting great art? Government is accountable to the majority, and, even though the NEA's appointed board is not directly answerable to voters, its survival depends on elected officials, and so its taste in art naturally gravitates toward the middle-brow. Avant-garde works would fare best under decentralized sponsorship.

Been There, Done That



January 1997 March 17, 1997

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ATNR7

Another widely held justification for the NEA is that art subsidies are a profitable public investment. *The New York Times* dedicated over 900 words to an article on a study purporting to prove that tax revenues from the arts exceeded public expenditures on the arts. The article briefly noted, before returning to a fawning recapitulation of the study's findings, that "much of the taxes would have been collected even if government had spent nothing on the arts." But that's the whole point. Suppose the government started giving billions to the movie industry. Would that be a good "investment" as long as the subsidy was smaller than the tax revenues generated by box-office sales? Of course not. The issue is not whether the resultant tax revenues are greater than the subsidy. The issue is whether those tax revenues are greater than what the government would have taken in if the money spent on the subsidy had been spent some other way.

The broader and more fundamental case for the NEA is that art enriches the nation's culture; since market pressure both limits the amount of art produced and forces it to conform to commercial values, federal subsidies can spawn more and better art. But private sector charity accounts for 99 percent of all fine arts funding. If the NEA were abolished, wealthy art lovers would probably rush to make up the 1 percent gap.

Even granting that the NEA improves the quantity and the quality of art does not necessarily mean that doing so falls within government's necessary role. Journals of opinion enrich the nation's intellectual life by providing a forum for the debate of issues. They can even be said to perform the vital public functions of voter education and policy innovation. Market pressure affects opinion magazines even more adversely than it affects art. Almost all such journals operate at a loss.

If the government directly funded opinion magazines, there would no doubt be more of them. Insulation from market pressures would diminish threats to their intellectual integrity and broaden the numbers of both publishers and readers. Yet the government does not do so, and most people would object to such an arrangement, because government money would bring with it influence over the marketplace of ideas. Inevitably, government would exert an even more venal influence than the market.

That's exactly what happened to art in the late 1980s, when right-wingers began attacking the NEA for funding high-profile avant-garde displays, such as Serrano's *Piss Christ*, that offended large segments of the public. The campaign against funding offensive art legitimized the exploitation of raw bigotry. By ostensibly criticizing a government agency, conservatives like Jesse Helms and Dick Armey were able to exploit cultural prejudices in a way that, if done openly, would be politically unacceptable.

Piss Christ epitomizes the NEA's fundamental conceptual dilemma. Either the NEA funds offensive art or it

doesn't. The first alternative, funding art without regard to political content, forces taxpayers to support the promulgation of ideas that mock their values. This is not a free speech issue: for a believing Christian, enduring the existence of a crucifix submerged in urine is an entirely different thing from having to pay for it. (Nor is such coercion tantamount to forcing a pacifist to help pay for nuclear bombs; building a bomb may promote the idea that weapons are okay, but that isn't its primary function. *Piss Christ*, on the other hand, has no function *besides* the promotion of ideas.) NEA advocates counter that the Endowment only accounts for a minuscule portion of the budget. But when principle is at stake, quantity doesn't matter. As Thomas Jefferson said: "To compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves *and abhors* is sinful and tyrannical."

Why can't the NEA just avoid the really controversial stuff? It could, but that would put the government in the business of deciding that some ideas are good and others are bad, that public funds can be used to violate some political or religious beliefs but not others. As a government intrusion into the marketplace of ideas, this is even worse. Far better that the government passively approve of controversial notions than actively disapprove of them.

One way out of this bind would be to fund only art that doesn't advance a point of view, or at least only a point of view with which everybody can agree. Such a "lowest common denominator" approach might work for things like national monuments. But art is supposed to challenge boundaries and assumptions. Stripping it of content would defeat the purpose of having an NEA.

The inescapable dilemma of the NEA is that money buys control. Ideally, the NEA would try to devise a system that divorced money from control—or, at the very least, enabled the government to provide as much money and wield as little control as possible. Instead the NEA does the opposite. It leverages its small amount of money into disproportionate power over what private donors support. "Grants from the National Endowment for the Arts are a matter of national prestige, a stamp of excellence," boasts an NEA fact sheet. "This 'Good Housekeeping' seal of approval testifies to the artistic quality of the recipient organization." Instead of lots of money and little control, which would be the best arrangement, the NEA gives out little money and wields lots of control. This is the worst of all possible worlds.

Of course, this isn't the NEA's fault. Republican budget cuts have forced the Endowment to scale back its largess and more closely scrutinize its beneficiaries. But the causes of this mess are here to stay. The NEA cannot escape political entanglements because it cannot escape the Constitution, which gives voters a say in how the government spends their money. And that means that the NEA will always be hostage to the whims of people like Jesse Helms. •

ISLAND OF DISENCHANTMENT

By Charles Lane

PORT-AU-PRINCE

The Haitian police who stumbled upon Eddy Arbrouet one night last May thought he was a dangerous bank robber, but they probably didn't know just how dangerous until Eddy and his gang opened fire. Amid the hail of heavy-caliber bullets, one cop dove for cover under a pile of banana leaves; another radioed for reinforcements. Help arrived and, miraculously, the police escaped. But Eddy Arbrouet remains at large and—at least for now—the police dare not tackle him again.

This obscure underworld episode would be of no interest outside Haiti except for one fact: Eddy Arbrouet is also wanted for the August 1996 murder of Antoine Leroy and Jacques Fleurival, two right-wing opponents of the U.S.-backed Haitian government. A pile of evidence links Arbrouet to the murders—and other evidence suggests that he was acting in collaboration with senior officers of Haiti's Presidential Security Unit, the American-trained and -financed corps of official bodyguards who protect Haiti's president, René Préal. Haitian officials deny that any such conspiracy existed. But U.S. officials and other sources familiar with the incident say the killing was one in a series carried out by political hit men who appear to have been operating from within the National Palace.

The mere existence of such a systematic campaign would of course raise new questions not only about Préal, but also about his predecessor, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who remains Haiti's most influential leader behind the scenes. It would therefore also represent a significant failure in the Clinton administration's Haiti policy, which the administration has been touting as a foreign policy triumph. Three years ago, when the U.S. dispatched 23,000 troops to expel the brutal Haitian Army, the FADH, from the power it had usurped from Aristide in a 1991 coup, the objective was not merely to restore a president but to build democracy as well. Aristide, who had seemingly endorsed mob violence against some political foes during his seven-month presidency before the coup, promised the U.S. that "national reconciliation," not vengeance, would follow his return to office. But with Arbrouet still at large, and twenty-six political murders since 1995 still officially unsolved, that promise—and hence the promise of democratic rule—seems unfulfilled.

It's true Haiti endured worse while the FADH was in control. The FADH and its "attachés"—a latter-day incarnation of François "Papa Doc" Duvalier's murderous Tontons Macoutes—killed hundreds, perhaps thousands, and so far nobody has been made to pay for these crimes, either. Nor can it be said that U.S. policy in Haiti has achieved nothing. For two centuries, Haiti has been the poorest and most violent society in the Americas. In that context, \$2 billion in U.S. aid, plus contributions from Canada and the European Union, has purchased some development—most palpably illustrated by the fact that the flow of Haitian boat people to the U.S. has largely ceased. Préal's succession of Aristide was the first time that one elected Haitian civilian had finished his term and peacefully transferred power to another. An elected, boisterous parliament is in place. A new U.S.-trained Haitian National Police has begun to tackle crime. (See "Copland," page 23.) New roads have been built and more are planned. The U.S. has shown the world it will not permit a successful military coup in this hemisphere.

But the Clinton administration has achieved less than it might have, and almost nothing irreversible. Not even the withdrawal of U.S. forces is total; some 500 soldiers and Marines remain, ostensibly to build roads and dig wells, but also to prevent a coup or other major threat to stability. The withdrawal of the last 1,300 U.N. peacekeepers from Canada and Pakistan, first set for March 31, has been twice postponed. The new date is November 30, but since the new National Police still cannot keep order, American officials are scrambling to preserve a foreign security presence after that.

While most Haitians still live in dire poverty, the government has moved slowly on critical economic reforms such as privatizing corrupt and inefficient state companies—reforms upon which foreign aid largely hinges. Prime Minister Rosny Smarth resigned on June 9, fed up with resistance to the reforms from Aristide's party, which controls the lower house of parliament. No successor has been approved by parliament, so the government is at a standstill. It cannot even conduct new business with foreign lenders or investors.

The Haitian electoral process has also collapsed. Turnout was less than 10 percent in elections to choose new local governments and one-third of the twenty-

seven-member national Senate on April 6. While in Haiti for nine days, I did not meet a single Haitian who voted, except for politicians themselves. What voting took place was tainted by massive irregularities. The Aristide-leaning Provisional Election Council, for example, tried to guarantee victory for pro-Aristide Senate candidates by excluding blank ballots from the vote count, a maneuver the Organization of American States declared illegal. Aristide's Senate candidates also benefited from highly visible—and highly intimidating—armed protection from presidential bodyguards. All parties except Aristide's refuse to recognize the April 6 results or to participate in runoffs, which have been indefinitely postponed. On August 19, the United Nations announced it would provide no further aid to elections in Haiti "until the credibility and transparency of the electoral process are re-established."

And then there are the political murders, for which no one has yet been convicted, or even formally charged, and which remain a source of quiet tension between the United States and Haiti. The Clinton administration has informed Préval that the Leroy-Fleurival investigation is a test case of Haiti's commitment to the rule of law; it has done so largely because Republicans in Congress have made clear *they* see Haiti's response to the murders as a test of the Clinton administration's policy. And so it is. Haiti has always been a country where the powerful and the well-connected are unaccountable—where they can literally get away with murder. If that has not changed, then nothing really has.

The trail of blood that leads to Eddy Arbrouet's hideout began at 3:45 in the afternoon of March 28, 1995, on a busy street in Port-au-Prince. Mireille Durocher Bertin and a client, Eugene Baillergeau Jr., were sitting in their car, stuck in a traffic jam, when two assailants opened fire on them with a 9 mm pistol and a 5.56 mm machine gun. Both died on the spot. (This account of the murders in Haiti, and the subsequent investigations, is based on interviews with Haitian and U.S. government sources, law enforcement sources in both countries, congressional hearing records and internal U.S. government documents.)

Coming soon after Aristide's restoration to power, the murder of Bertin and her associate sent a chill through Haiti: Bertin, an attorney for members of the traditional elite, was one of Aristide's leading critics. Shortly before her death, she had sent a letter to U.S. military authorities, who were in control of the island at the time. Written on behalf of the right-wing Mobilization for National Development Party (MDN), the letter accused an Aristide government intelligence operative named Patric Moise of being involved in a plot to kill 100 members of the right-wing elite.

Her letter was one reason U.S. military officials were not entirely surprised by her murder. Another was that nine days before the killing, a Haitian employee of the U.S. forces had made a startling statement to his American boss: Moise had asked him to assist in a plan to kill

Bertin. Mondesir Beaubrun, then Aristide's minister of interior, had purportedly offered Moise \$5,000 to carry out the hit. The U.S. Army immediately arrested five suspects, including Moise, catching four of the alleged conspirators in an Isuzu Trooper owned by the Ministry of Interior, a car Moise said Minister Beaubrun had lent to him. (Baubrun denies plotting; he now lives in the Dominican Republic.)

But then U.S. officials made a strange decision. Rather than warn Bertin about the plots directly, they asked Aristide and his Minister of Justice, Jean-Joseph Exume, to warn Bertin. (Some U.S. embassy officials had argued that U.S. officials should warn Bertin directly, but they were overruled by the U.S. Ambassador, William Swing, according to a General Accounting Office report about the affair.) Exume claims he did warn her, but she didn't heed him. Bertin's family says Exume merely told her she might be arrested, and said nothing of the murder plot.

Whatever the case, U.S. officials were palpably alarmed when Bertin showed up dead despite what they thought was a good-faith understanding that Aristide and his justice minister would protect her. With President Clinton set to arrive for a triumphal visit to Haiti on April 1, Ambassador Swing asked Aristide to invite FBI agents to help crack the case. Aristide, evincing great dismay at Bertin's death, agreed. By dawn of the day after the murders, the first FBI agents were picking up bullet fragments at the scene of the crime.

The FBI quickly discounted theories that the murders had been related to a robbery, drug trafficking or a family dispute. Instead, the investigators said, the most likely scenario was that a second group of government hit men had taken over after the U.S. nipped the Beaubrun-Moise plot in the bud. Among the leads were radio conversations intercepted by the U.S. military the day of the killing, in which two men appeared to be talking about following Bertin's car. The two men were Joseph Medard, then the deputy chief of Aristide's bodyguards, and Lieutenant Pierre Lubin of the Interim Public Security Force (IPSF), the police force that Aristide selected—and financed with U.S. money—to help American troops keep order during the transition. The FBI began trying to question Medard, Lubin and several other officials of the IPSF and the National Palace.

Suddenly, FBI agents found themselves in the position of having to investigate the very government officials who were supposed to help them solve the case. The Haitians were not accommodating. Haitian officials told the FBI agents they could not investigate the Bertin case unless they also agreed to investigate twenty killings by the ousted military regime. In May, FBI agents saw Haitian government vehicles parked menacingly near the home of a key witness. Witnesses told of threats from the IPSF. On June 7, the FBI interrogation of one IPSF agent was disrupted by a heavily armed group of other IPSF agents. Ambassador Swing sent the State Department a cable saying that "the FBI investiga-

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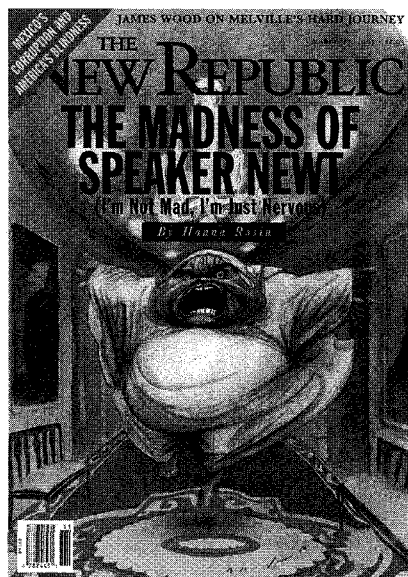
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tion of the Bertin assassination is at a standstill due to lack of [Haitian government] cooperation."

The FBI called for a high-level meeting between American officials and Aristide. At the meeting, on July 3, 1995, the Haitian president implied that he shared American concerns, promising that the FBI would have unfettered access to anyone it wished to interview. Aristide's sole and seemingly reasonable condition: that those interviewed by the FBI have access to attorneys. The American officials agreed. Through Ira Kurzban, his Miami-based American lawyer, Aristide arranged for fifteen IPSF and National Palace officials to be represented by two Miami defense lawyers, at a cost of \$120,000 to the Haitian taxpayer.

The result was more frustration for the FBI. The Miami lawyers said the FBI could only interview the Haitians if the lawyers could make and keep verbatim transcripts. The FBI refused: it almost never permits persons it questions in the U.S. to keep a transcript, for the obvious reason that this could compromise the confidentiality of their preliminary investigations. This was a particular concern in the Bertin case, where the FBI felt it was seeking to interview a group of possible co-conspirators. Feeling double-crossed by its supposed Haitian partners, the FBI withdrew from Haiti on October 13, 1995.

After the FBI quit, the Bertin case was assigned to the Haitian police force's new Special Investigations Unit. The unit consists of a small U.S.-funded team of Haitians working under the direction of an American adviser with forensic support from the FBI. At Haitian insistence, the unit is also looking into killings by the ousted military regime; but it has had plenty of new business. Indeed, the suspicious killings continued while the FBI was still in town.

Michel Gonzales, a prominent Haitian airline executive, lived with his horses on forty acres in the Port-au-Prince exurb of Tabarre. He rented the property from the wealthy, conservative Debrosse family. Gonzales's next-door neighbor was a powerful Haitian, too: Aristide.

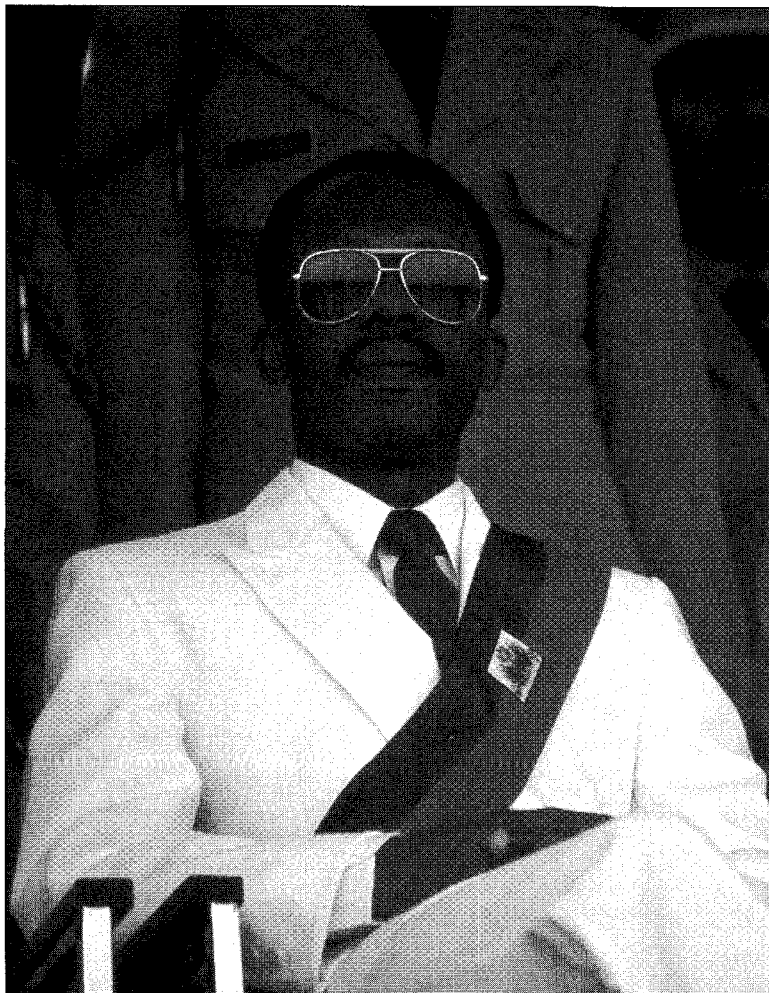
On two occasions around the time of Aristide's return to Haiti, Aristide's advisers, Jean-Marie Cherestal and Leslie Voltaire, asked U.S. officials to obtain the land for Aristide's use, according to two U.S. sources familiar with the events. The request was refused. (Voltaire denies this; Cherestal could not be reached.) At that point, Gonzales's friends say, visitors began arriving and telling Gonzales pointedly to get out. He didn't. On May 22, 1995, two men on a motorbike shot Gonzales dead in front of Aristide's place, while Gonzales's wife and daughter—both American citizens—looked on in horror. No one in Haiti is quite sure now who owns

the property, but it appears to be vacant.

Two days after the cops found Gonzales dead, Michel-Ange Hermann, a former colonel in the FADH, was gunned down. And in the run-up to the national elections, assassins felled two minor Senate candidates: Leslie Grimar, an auto parts dealer, and Max Mayard, a former general with the FADH. An FBI inspection of shell casings found at the Bertin, Hermann, Mayard and Grimar murder scenes has established that the bullets were all fired from the same gun. They also match shell casings found at the Leroy-Fleurival homicide scene. Which brings us back to the case that made Eddy Arbrouet the most wanted man in Haiti.

The summer of 1996 was a politically tense period in Port-au-Prince. U.S. intelligence developed reliable information that Haitian rightists and ex-FADH officers were arming for a coup against President Préval. Shots were fired at the National Palace. On August 17, Préval's police tackled the threat by rounding up nineteen former FADH members at the headquarters of the same party with which Bertin had been associated, the MDN. Three days after that, Leroy and Fleurival were killed.

Within hours of the shooting, the U.S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince had convincing evidence that several presidential bodyguards had been present at the crime. (*The Los Angeles Times* has reported that the evidence consisted of intercepted radio conversations among the



JEAN-BERTRAND ARISTIDE

© Jean Claude Coutasse, 1992

bodyguards.) Police found a Taurus 9 mm pistol next to Leroy's body. The serial number on the Taurus identified it as property of the presidential bodyguards.

Even more damning evidence about Arbrouet's ties to the National Palace has emerged since then. Arbrouet was a paid informant for the presidential bodyguards, working directly for the top officer, Joseph Moise. Arbrouet had both an entry pass to the National Palace and a government-issued gun. On August 5, 1996, the National Police arrested Arbrouet after he attempted to rob an armored truck in Cap-Haitien. But, according to a non-U.S. diplomat in Port-au-Prince familiar with the case, Arbrouet was released from jail after one of the presidential bodyguards called the National Police in Cap-Haitien and ordered his release. Fifteen days later, Leroy and Fleurival were dead. Bullet shells gathered at the murder scene matched shells from the Glock 9 mm pistol Arbrouet used in the failed holdup.

Ambassador Swing did not yet know all of this when the bodies of Leroy and Fleurival showed up on August 20, 1996. But what he did know caused him to rush to Préval and urge him to take action against the killers in his midst. Préval balked. Ambassador Swing summoned National Security Adviser Anthony Lake and Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, who—upon arriving in Port-au-Prince on August 30, 1996—told Préval he could lose American support unless he purged his bodyguards. Only then did the true reason for Préval's hesitation become clear: according to senior U.S. officials, he feared he would be killed himself if he took on the bodyguards, most of whom were selected by, and primarily loyal to, Aristide. (Préval has since publicly denied this.)

The highly unstable situation posed a threat not only to the physical survival of the president of Haiti, but also to the political survival of the president of the United States, who was running for re-election at the time. The Clintonites tried to handle the dilemma by dispatching forty-six American bodyguards to watch Préval's back while he began the delicate process of removing the ten bodyguards who were suspected of having knowledge of, or a role in, the killings. Moise, the top officer, was one of the first to be suspended at U.S. insistence. But Préval dragged his feet about firing the men, and delays cropped up in the Haitian investigation.

Leroy's body was in handcuffs when police discovered it; those handcuffs have now disappeared from the custody of the Haitian judicial authorities. At one point, the State Department heard a rumor that senior Haitian officials had tried to coach eyewitnesses to the killings. That prompted Clinton to send Préval a letter on December 12, 1996, warning that U.S. aid to Haiti was at risk. By then, the Clinton administration was also responding to pressure from New York Congressman Benjamin A. Gilman and other Republican critics on Capitol Hill. After months of Republican threats to cut off aid, and several more administration *démarches* to Préval, the last of Préval and Aristide's bodyguards sus-

pected of involvement in the case were finally kicked off the government payroll by July 30 of this year. Not that they were treated too harshly: each walked away with a severance package equal to four months' salary.

Today, a security detail from the State Department still watches Préval. Arbrouet is a fugitive, though his whereabouts are an open secret: he's in Leogane, an hour's drive from Port-au-Prince. He has been spotted driving around Port-au-Prince in a new Fiat. Arbrouet has even gone on the radio to claim that anything he did was on the orders of Pierre Denize, chief of the National Police. Though probably untrue, the claim shows Arbrouet understands his best protection from arrest is the fear Haitian officials have of what he might say if he's ever captured alive.

U.S. officials say the National Police SWAT team now has weapons heavy enough to match Arbrouet's arsenal, and that a new attempt to bust him will be made. But just how eager are the Haitian authorities to take on Arbrouet? I asked Ambassador Swing when we could expect an arrest. "The wanted posters are up in the police stations," he replied. I didn't see any—not even at National Police headquarters. In Jacmel, just down the road from Leogane, a detective told me he'd never heard of Arbrouet. Really? I asked. Oh yes, he suddenly recalled, there had been a poster in his station for a while, "but it mysteriously disappeared."

Since the Leroy-Fleurival killings, Aristide and Préval's traditional right-wing enemies have been, in the words of one U.S. official, "quiescent." Yet the Aristide forces still face opposition from some of their former allies, and it is Aristide's determination to triumph over these opponents—rather than bargain with them—that has precipitated the current electoral crisis.

Lavalas, the loose popular coalition Aristide first rode to electoral victory back in 1990, has fractured into two separate political parties. The Lavalas Political Organization (OPL) is, as its name suggests, an organized, internally democratic political party. OPL wants to get ahead by playing ball with Haiti's international patrons: supporting economic reform and privatization, strengthening the role of the parliament and the courts. The OPL's leaders broke with Aristide in late 1995, when he maneuvered, unsuccessfully, to extend his term, in violation of the Haitian Constitution. OPL controls the Haitian Senate.

As its name suggests, Aristide's party, Fanmi Lavalas—Creole for "the Lavalas family"—is organized around Aristide as the personalistic leader who decides all major questions, in consultation with a small inner circle. Though Aristide and his supporters denounce U.S.-backed economic reforms as unfair to the poor, it's not clear what they support—except their own access to traditional sources of power and patronage. The tainted April 6 elections were, in part, a bid by Aristide to get control over the Senate by hook or by crook. Among the "winning" candidates was Jean-Marie Fourel Celestin, an Aristide crony whose reputation for

corruption reportedly contributed to the Haitian Senate's decision to reject him when Aristide tried to nominate him as police chief in 1995.

All the key issues in Haitian politics—the future of the economic reforms, the prime ministership, control of the Senate, the credibility of elections themselves—hinge on the struggle between OPL and Fanmi Lavalas. “The hour is late in Haiti,” concluded a June 26 House International Affairs Committee report on the situation that was signed not only by Gilman, the Republican chairman, but also by ranking Democrat Lee Hamilton of Indiana. Stung by rising bipartisan concern, the administration has dispatched a parade of high-level emissaries, including former National Security Adviser Lake, to urge Aristide to cut a deal.

But the effort is not going well. Aristide has little incentive to negotiate. After all, he “won” the April 6 vote; and, with U.S. acquiescence, the installation of local governments, of which he controls a plurality, is moving forward. On August 26, the Fanmi Lavalas-dominated lower house of parliament rejected Préval's U.S.-supported choice for prime minister, a political unknown named Ericq Pierre. Préval barely lifted a finger to help Pierre; he seems cowed by Aristide, whom he served as a loyal subordinate throughout his entire previous career in politics.

Perhaps the Clinton administration will orchestrate some face-saving solution. Even if it does, a short-term political arrangement is no substitute for institutional development. Aristide is committed to a politics of personalistic leadership and haphazard “mass action.” In deference to his de facto power, U.S. officials still deal with him almost as a head of state. When U.N. Ambassador Bill Richardson visited Port-au-Prince in July to cement local support for an extension of the U.N. troop presence, his key meeting was with Aristide. It had to be: “popular” organizations linked to the former president were staging violent demonstrations against the very foreign troops that had reinstated Aristide. Anti-U.N., anti-American graffiti remain daubed in red on

the whitewashed walls of Port-au-Prince and its surrounding slums, reminders that nothing important can be decided without Aristide and his forces.

Perhaps the writing on the wall is also a sign that Clinton administration policy in Haiti needs a review, beginning with a reassessment of the U.S. relationship—past, present and future—with Aristide. Aristide's image has been defined by polarized perceptions ever since he burst on the scene as the fiery priest-tribune of Haiti's poor and oppressed after the 1986 collapse of the Duvalier regime. To the Haitian poor and liberal Democrats in the United States, especially the Congressional

Black Caucus, he was gentle *Titid*—“little Aristide”—a prophet, a Caribbean Martin Luther King. To the Haitian elite and many conservative American Republicans, he was an unhinged communist rabble-rouser.

A more realistic view of Aristide begins with a journey down the finest paved highway in Haiti, the new 15th of October Boulevard. Named for the date in 1994 on which U.S. troops brought Aristide back in triumph, the road runs seven miles from the elite enclave of Pétion-Ville to the heavily guarded compound in Tabarre where Aristide, defrocked by his long-time foes in the Roman Catholic hierarchy, now lives with his American wife and their child. I was not



HAITIAN BOY AND GIRL IN THE LA SALINE SLUM AREA OF PORT-AU-PRINCE

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invited in. But Michele Karshan, a leftist American journalist who works as a spokesperson for Aristide and Préval in Port-au-Prince, told me chez Aristide is a modest abode. “The pool is not that big,” she said.

Along the road, you pass the headquarters of Aristide's Foundation for Democracy and a giant stone-and-metal monument (in the shape of a rickety sail boat) to the Haitian refugees whose travail had so much to do with Aristide's return to power. You also pass luxury housing developments, car dealerships and factories. Aristide's 15th of October Boulevard has made rural Tabarre into a burgeoning exurb—and someone is making a handsome real-estate fortune as a result. Neither Aristide nor the government ever

Cop land

By all accounts, Haiti's new National Police Force is the best-trained and best-qualified force in the island's history. The Clinton administration talks up its success, and this year alone the U.S. will subsidize the force's training to the tune of \$6.5 million. But for all the progress, the police force remains susceptible to the influence of Haitian figures whom the U.S. government suspects of corruption and political violence against opponents of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. And that is bad news in a country where the establishment of a clean, apolitical and effective police force is a prerequisite for real democracy.

Among the most controversial figures hovering around the new police is Dany Toussaint. As a major in the FADH, the now-defunct Haitian military force, Toussaint was one of Aristide's few early supporters in that force and is reputed to have rescued Aristide during the 1991 coup. Aristide, with U.S. approval, placed Toussaint in charge of the country's temporary police force after the U.S. intervention in 1994. But later the FBI soured on Toussaint; the Bureau came to believe that Toussaint had frustrated, rather than facilitated, its investigation of the murder of Mireille Durocher Bertin, Aristide's right-wing political opponent, in 1995.

Citing intelligence that allegedly linked Toussaint to incidents of political violence, the U.S. eventually told the government of President René Préval (who succeeded Aristide) to keep Toussaint out of the new National Police that replaced the interim police at the end of 1995. Then, in August of last year, Joseph Sullivan, the State Department's top Haiti official, sent a letter to the Immigration and Naturalization Service instructing that agency to block Toussaint's entry into the United States because of American intelligence that the Aristide confidant had "participated in extrajudicial killings."

Sure enough, this January the Immigration and Naturalization Service arrested Toussaint at the Miami airport. Toussaint was held for two days and questioned about the Bertin case by the FBI; he has since claimed an FBI agent told him that "he knows I am not the triggerman but they would like me to cooperate with them." Toussaint refused the purported offer; his U.S. lawyer, Ira Kurzban, says Toussaint is

the innocent target of an intimidation campaign by U.S. officials frustrated by their own fruitless investigations.

Kurzban says that the intelligence on Toussaint is tainted by the CIA's longstanding anti-Aristide bias. Eventually, U.S. authorities had to let Toussaint go, first from detainment and then from the country. He returned to a hero's welcome from Aristide supporters.

The forced stay in the U.S. did prevent Toussaint from running for Senate in Haiti's April 6 elections, but he has prospered in other ways. Now acting as chief of security and intelligence for Aristide's party, he also runs a large force of private security guards, a firing range where customers pay to shoot high-caliber guns and a new company called Dany King's Police and Security Supply. Located at No. 2 Rue Lamarre, in the upper-class Port-au-Prince suburb of Pétiön-Ville, the establishment is the only place in Haiti where members of the underequipped police force can buy vital supplies. A Haitian security-industry source told me that some equipment on sale in Toussaint's shop was originally donated to Haiti by Taiwan. Several cops complained to me about the prices: it costs almost a day's pay to get an iron-on shoulder patch that identifies the wearer as a police officer.

Toussaint, of course, isn't just making money. His business lets him infiltrate the very police from which the Clinton administration has tried to exclude him. In what is supposed to be the first apolitical force in Haitian history, former President Aristide's security chief clearly has influence. Walk into any police station in Port-au-Prince, and you'll see a bright red, white and blue sticker on the wall proclaiming that "Dany King Supports the Haitian National Police."

One piece of good news is that the force's chief, Pierre Denize, seems to be one of Haiti's brighter lights—a man tough on both malfeasance in his own ranks and crime in the streets. Denize has professionalized the force. Now recruits must pass an entrance exam, and undergo four months of training with a strong emphasis on human rights. Already, Denize has expelled 135 cops on charges ranging from incompetence to brutality—a major feat in a country whose security forces have traditionally stolen and killed as they pleased.

But even Denize has his questionable side. He owns Cobra, a company that provides armed protection to those with enough money to pay. Of course, Cobra's financial success

depends upon a public perception that the National Police can't do their job fully—which is precisely the perception Denize is supposed to be eradicating. "Haitians do not have a developed notion of conflict of interest," sighs a Clinton administration official.

Indeed, far from discouraging Denize, the government of Haiti hired Cobra to protect Teleco, the state-owned telephone monopoly. Denize, through Burton Wides, Haiti's American attorney, says parliament permitted him to retain a passive interest in Cobra; through Wides, Teleco says Cobra got its contract through competitive bidding. Or relatively competitive: Denize's partner, Serge Calvin, is President Préval's brother-in-law.

Another apparent problem under Denize's leadership is the use of foreign money intended to shore up the island's historically underfunded cops. The United States and other nations underwrite a base wage for police of about \$375 per month, on the sound theory that decent pay is the cops' best protection against the lure of bribery. However, police officers complain that unjust or poorly explained payroll deductions reduce their take-home pay by up to 20 percent a month. Dolse Estilien, 38, a member of an anti-gang unit, told me he must contribute two-and-a-half days' pay per month toward a pension for which he will only be eligible thirty years from now—if, unlike the average Haitian man, he lives that long. To date, the National Police have not disclosed how, or if, the pension fund is being invested.

Cops are supplied with a gun, shoes and a single uniform upon their graduation from the police academy. Several of them told me that they are required to reimburse the force for these supplies through more payroll deductions—even though most of the equipment was donated to Haiti from abroad. Bernard Gedner, 35, chief detective in the town of Jacmel, is a capable former math teacher who joined the police for the salary. But he has to pay informants out of his own pocket because he has no intelligence budget, despite the fact that Denize is supposed to have tens of thousands of dollars per month to distribute for that purpose. Detective Gedner told me he has spent some \$250 of his own money on extra uniforms and other supplies. And where did he buy them? Where else but Dany King's Police and Security Supply?

CHARLES LANE

explained where the funds for the road came from, though it was built not long after Taiwan, grateful for the diplomatic recognition it received from Aristide's government, gave Haiti \$20 million to rebuild the congested, rutted main road in the slum of Carrefour. The Carrefour project has barely been started.

What the trip down the Tabarre road suggests is that for Aristide, the child of obscure lower-middle-class parents from the Haitian outback, the ten years since the fall of the Duvalier dynasty have been an improbable, very nearly fatal, journey from the margins of Haitian society to its very pinnacle, from outcast to power-broker. To rise, he employed neither the nonviolence of King nor the conspiratorialism of Lenin. Rather, his were the traditional instruments of Caribbean politics. His true political antecessors are such figures as Eric Gairy of Grenada, Rafael Trujillo of the Dominican Republic, and even "Papa Doc" himself, who also began his career as an apostle of black pride among the Haitian poor.

Like them, Aristide's greatest asset is his ability to keep his true intentions hidden amid the rapture of his supporters and the rage of his opponents. Aristide is a master orator in the proletarian Creole tongue—barely comprehensible to Americans and Haiti's French-speaking elite—using its subtle, sarcastic poetry to inspire the hopes and inflame the passions of the man in the street, and to weave a web of mystery and charisma around his own persona. He understood the centrality of religion and *janmi* in Haitian culture, and thus organized his followers, whether orphaned street kids, parishioners or disgruntled soldiers, into a series of interconnected "families," all of them headed by Father Aristide.

He also understood, and accepted, the inevitability and the necessity of violence in Haitian politics. But in contrast to his brutish military opponents, Aristide has deployed violence selectively—and always with plausible deniability—whether he's assembling a shadowy coterie of bodyguards around himself, or using Creole double entendres to incite his supporters to throw burning tires around the necks of his enemies.

And finally, Aristide has known how to handle the U.S. He understands that the bottom-line American concern in Haiti is political and economic instability, and the attendant prospect of a mass migration of poor black people to the shores of Florida. It was this fear, tinged with genuine American pity for the most miserable land in the hemisphere, that Aristide, helped by well-intentioned American liberals, exploited to maneuver Bill Clinton into using the mightiest military in the world to restore him to power. Today, Aristide still manipulates that pity-tinged fear to get the Clintonites to deal with him.

Or to bluff them. Though Aristide is still the likeliest winner in the presidential election planned for 2000—even if the election is clean—I was struck by the degree to which his popular appeal has faded in the seven long years since the 1990 election, in which he polled 67 percent. In part, he has been brought down to earth

by defrocking and marriage. In part, he partakes of Haiti's general political apathy. But also, Aristide is less loved because of the evidence that he is enmeshed in a profoundly violent and corrupt political culture.

I spent an afternoon in Carrefour with a former employee of his government, a well-educated social worker in her thirties. Her whole family supported Aristide before and during the coup period, at considerable risk. But now her elderly father never speaks Aristide's name. Her brother, a shopkeeper, still defends Aristide, but even he didn't vote on April 6. For her part, the social worker found she "could not accept" what she saw within the Aristide administration. "Before the people believed in *Titid* because he had the name of 'Father,'" she told me, her voice dipping to a whisper. "But now they perceive that in a different way, like a mafioso—like a godfather."

On my last full day in Haiti, I visited Cité Soleil, the notorious Port-au-Prince slum where some 200,000 horribly poor people live crammed into five square miles between an industrial park and the Caribbean Sea. As expected, I saw raw sewage running through the cratered streets; tin-roof shacks full of hungry children; sullen, disaffected people, all of whom once supported Aristide, none of whom told me they still vote. "The cost of living is so high right now, plus we have children to feed, and things are getting harder and harder every day," said Wesley Jean, a 26-year-old non-voter who earns \$33 a month repairing clothes on a beat-up Singer sewing machine.

I noted, though, that the worst signs of squalor—the garbage; the open sewers; the rampant gang battles on unlit, poorly policed streets—are traceable to governmental failure. The signs of hope and life, by contrast, sprang from two sources. One was the U.S. military: with minimal Haitian government involvement, the American Marines, Navy and Air Force troops have built a school and provide visiting medical services. They have dug freshwater wells and a new road. The benefits are of the kind Haiti's poor can see and feel. "It used to take me all day to go downtown to look for a job," said 33-year-old Lut Fenellon. On the American road, it takes three hours.

The other source of hope is the hard work and creativity of ordinary people themselves: Wesley Jean pumping away at his Singer; shacks converted, brick by individually purchased brick, into more substantial homes; front-stoop snack bars that supply families with untaxed income. It is obvious why so many Haitians prosper as immigrants in the U.S. It is equally obvious they could prosper if their own country had the rule of law.

The story of the Haitian slums, in short, is an old one: good people, bad government. That is still the case after three years of the Clinton administration's politico-military stewardship. Unless the Haitian people and their American patrons find a way to develop Haiti that does not involve paying tribute to corrupt, violent and incompetent elites, the fate of this long-suffering land will probably always be tied, in some form, to the fate of people like Eddy Arbrouet. •

THE HARD QUESTIONS

Mourning in America

One hates to contribute to a phenomenon one finds both bizarre and altogether normal. But there is no way to avoid the Death of Diana. What is this phenomenon of besotted grief feeding on itself?

It is too easy to remain above and superior to such events. The lives and deaths of celebrities are part of our lives. When Elvis Presley died, thousands of ordinary folks walked off their jobs to get to Memphis. It was more than just empty adulation. Presley was an authentic musical genius who braided the rich, raunchy rhythms of black and white folk music. And his life and death embodied an American morality play: the dirt-poor kid from Tupelo, Mississippi, conquers the world but loses himself along the way. Those journeying to Memphis—then and now—were not deluded about the life Elvis had lived and how he had lived it. There were lessons to be drawn from his meteoric rise and his lonely, bloated death.

Recent scholars have detailed the raw talent and the great musical gifts and relayed stories of Elvis, already famous and rich beyond his wildest dreams, driving in the dead of night from Graceland back to Tupelo to sit in a dark car and stare out at the shotgun shack on the wrong side of the tracks, reminding himself of where he had come from. He couldn't believe it himself.

If Presley defined one era, John Lennon captured another. The outpouring of grief that followed his murder on December 8, 1980, also made sense on many levels. Musical genius once again lay at the heart of the reaction, but the Beatles were that and more, a phenomenon that transcended any one culture and coalesced, for better or for worse, urgent stirrings across the continents. Perhaps it is the case that the generational identities that first came into blurry focus in the '50s got congealed in the '60s. We all know the good, the bad and the ugly that these cultural politics produced. The upshot is that when people mourned Lennon, they were marking moments in their own lives.

Now Diana. Her story marks the tidal merger of politics into celebrity (and vice versa) and the collapse of news into that ersatz stuff now indiscriminately passed

off as news. Thus, one acid-tongued commentator from London, billed as an expert on the royal family, could be found ranting on multiple programs and insisting, on the basis of the reports in the tabloids (where else?), that the British public believes the "tight-lipped, cold-hearted queen should be throttled" and that "Charles will be booed and things will be thrown at him if he walks behind her coffin in the funeral." But to whom was this expert promising derisive pandemonium along the route of the funeral procession? She and the teeming throng just like her are new variants on an old breed: feeders off tragedy who purvey bathos and cheap thrills; creepy sorts now transmogrified by our media into gurus of *Schadenfreude*.

Some sort of cultural transition has taken place. Why did Diana's own self-confessed and ill-chosen liaisons not create a scandal even as Charles's one long-term relationship, reactivated after the marriage had gone sour, branded him as an unfeeling brute? What sort of double standard has been effected by the tabloidization and feminization of culture? Why has the rich-to-richer story been swallowed up by that of a figure now presented as a glamorous Mother Teresa, with more "causes" than the Mother herself?

As I trekked out during the post-accident frenzy to pick up the newspaper, the fellow leafing through *USA Today* next to me kept murmuring: "It's just terrible how that little girl died, just terrible." It is terrible, but she wasn't a "little girl" when she died, not by any stretch of the imagination. Or was she? Isn't that, too, part of the story of media representation? Presented as a vulnerable and wan soul brought to life by the sight of the needy or the touch of a *real* lover, we quickly find ourselves in the land of archetypes. The icy unfashionable monarch next to the febrile fashion plate. No contest, not in this day and age. Queen Elizabeth and her family may have had what it took to steel their subjects to fight Hitler and his minions, but they cannot fight the "little girl" with the alternately doleful and dazzling visage. As one of the "experts" put it during one news show: "We don't care whether the royal family are hurt. We care about our hurt. And they don't care about our hurt."

There are those, and Diana was one, who play the celebrity culture to maximum advantage. The current occupant of the White House is another such figure. Charming and voluble, he turns out

to be the real teflon president, untouched by scandals, past and present. The important thing is that he *feels*. That seems to have been Diana's trump card, too. Her heart trembled and "went out" to the "less fortunate." I should have thought the Lady Bountiful image might, by now, have given way to something a bit tougher-minded but, in fact, they blur indiscriminately. The life-long, unblinker vocation of Mother Teresa—forged, as it was, by a "harsh and terrible love"—oozes into Diana's photo-op "visits" to various sites of human distress.

Diana did reach out and smile and touch, and that is apparently all we want or need. Land mines were her latest cause and the damage wrought by land mines is a huge issue. But with the United States seeking exceptions to a proposed land-mine ban and key powers

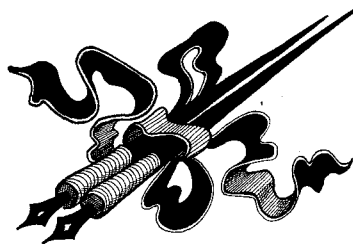
like Russia and China not even participating in the current negotiations, the hard politics of this matter is likely to occupy diplomats for years to come. But we have no patience at all with this process, with Max Weber's definition of politics as the

arduous boring of hard boards. We prefer our causes neat and we like beautiful people to lead the charge.

As the cultural historian David Martin has observed, the children of the present age (whatever their own chronological age) have "little interest in sin, redemptive suffering, or moral obligation." Instead, what is played out is a spiritual style deeply reliant on astrologers and psychics and gurus of all shapes, sizes and varieties. Diana, as "Queen of Hearts," with her stories of bulimia and lovelessness and "low self-esteem" and addictions to self-help regimens of all kinds was the perfect New Age princess who shared the voracious appetites and shallow urgencies of a huge public who could not get enough of her or of itself ingesting her. That this public has apparently turned against the family, now charged with rearing and sheltering her children as best it can, displays the new age at its ugliest. Diana was no doubt tormented by the monster she herself had helped to unleash. That the celebrity machine will now give her children no peace, even to mourn her passing, is the cruelest of ironies.

Evidently, it is no longer acceptable to afford private grief the time and space it requires. Instead, the currents of this emotionally fraught epoch seep into every cultural pore. We have met the zeitgeist in the Death of Diana.

JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN



BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

A Wry Look at Hell

The German director Michael Verhoeven has done the near-impossible. He has made a film about the Holocaust that, after the few memorable films on the subject and the flood of lesser ones, needs to be seen. This is not because Verhoeven tells us facts we don't know but because of his mode of presentation—gentleness, reticence, and, of all incredible elements, humor.

My Mother's Courage (National Center for Jewish Film) was written by George Tabori, first as a play, then as a novel, and is now adapted to the screen by Verhoeven. It tells of one phenomenal day—in 1944—in the life of Tabori's mother, a Budapest Jew, and her encounter that day with German forces. In this extraordinary story the context of horror is always present; still, as an enclosed anecdote floating on a frightening sea, a caprice of fate at a time when fate was grinding lives away, the incident has touches of heart-tearing humor.

Verhoeven was the perfect director for this film. In *The White Rose* (1982) he told of the White Rose Society, those Munich university students who in 1942 broadcast anti-Nazi messages, and were ultimately arrested and decapitated. It's hard to think of that film, even to write its name, without trembling. In *The Nasty Girl* (1990) he dealt with a postwar small-town student who wanted to write a paper on her town's behavior during the Nazi era and who met unexpected obstacles, all of them treated with cinematic satire. *My Mother's Courage* is underpinned with the grimness of the first film yet, like the second one, is tinged with a god's-eye view of human barbarity.

Apropos of the new film, an interviewer asked Verhoeven if he was interested in cinema reality. The director replied: "I make it clear in the very first scene: we are in a film studio and here we are performing a story, but we have no right to assert that this is reality." The interviewer asked: "Why not? It is, after all, a true story." Said Verhoeven: "Precisely because it is a true story." This is more than interview cuteness. It's the statement of an artist who is moved and modest, who wants to present an incident that is, in the cosmic view, ridiculous but who doesn't want to seem proprietary of history.

Tabori, now in his 80s, has had long experience in Europe, then here, then back in Europe as playwright and theater director and screenwriter. Hungarian by birth, he has, since the war, worked mostly in German-language countries and has developed a name for approaching subjects, as writer and director, at odd angles. (*My Mother's Courage* was first presented by Tabori's own

German theater troupe in 1979.) Some thirty years ago I saw a play of his at a Massachusetts summer theater: the subject was *The Merchant of Venice* as performed by the inmates of a concentration camp for the officers of the camp. The Jewish actors so blatantly overdid Jewish caricature that the officers grew uncomfortable. This was the Jews' only means of protest. The long title of that play was an obvious echo of the title of Weiss's Marat-Sade play; the title of *My Mother's Courage* announces its refraction from Brecht.

Cinematically, Verhoeven keeps Tabori's refracting edge sharp. Recurrent visual references to other films—*The Gold Rush*, *Shoah*, *All Quiet on the Western Front*—remind us that this film is a product of a culture and that the events in the film desecrate that culture. And Verhoeven uses a simple device to keep the film from outright wither-wringing. Throughout, the dialogue is recorded rather softly. We can tell from the level of the incidental music that this is not an accident. This softness breathes the air of recollection.

At the start of the film we see a very large photo of Mrs. Tabori as a young woman. In walks the elderly Tabori, in front of the photo, to tell us that this is his mother and that we are going to see her story. Hungary, though it was an Axis ally in World War II, didn't much harry its Jews until 1944 when, for complex political reasons, the round-up started. Tabori père was taken away (with, apparently, little foreboding about his fate). One day, Mrs. Tabori is out shopping when two elderly men she knows, retired policemen, meet her and politely ask her to accompany them. One of them has gout, the other asthma, but the police are short-handed and have pressed retirees into service. She is concerned for their well-being as they take her along.

With many other Jews, Mrs. Tabori is loaded on to a freight train. When the train stops so that Jews can be transferred to another train bound for Auschwitz, Mrs. Tabori seizes the chance

FILMS WORTH SEEING

In the Company of Men. With the cruelty of Restoration comedy, two modern young men play a trick on a young woman, which ends surprisingly. Perceptively acted. Acutely written and directed by Neil LaBute. (Reviewed 9/1/97) **Mrs. Brown.** The much wondered-about story of Queen Victoria and her Scottish groom, John Brown. Engaging actors. (8/4/97) **Ulee's Gold.** Another northern Florida film by Victor Nunez, exploring the region's qualities. Peter Fonda, grizzled and firm, as a beekeeper whose family gets entangled with crime. Overplotted but appealing. (7/7/97) **A Self-Made Hero.** During World War II, a Frenchman makes his fantasy life come true. Bright and bitter. (9/22/97)—SK

to burst into the private compartment of the German officer in command of the first train. She tells the officer that she has a Swedish pass. (Raoul Wallenberg had placed some Hungarian Jews under Swedish protection.) But she says she doesn't have it with her, she had just gone out to shop. The officer is impressed with her and allows her to accompany him back to Budapest where she can produce the pass. (She also manages the release of the young daughter of a diplomat.)

The scene that follows, familiar in outline—the smooth Nazi commander and the “interesting” prisoner—is given a fresh charge by the crotchets of the officer and the unruffled courage of Mrs. Tabori. By the time the train arrives back in Budapest, he excuses himself to go to the toilet and tells her sternly that he doesn't want to find her or the young girl there when he returns. When Mrs. Tabori gets home, her sister and her brother-in-law scold her for not letting them know where she has been all day.

Tabori-Verhoeven make sure, with a closing statement, that we don't think this story is typical of what happened in Hungary. Though Mrs. Tabori survived to write an account of her adventure, her husband died in Auschwitz. Before the war Hungary had 760,000 Jews; after the war, about 260,000. All her life Mrs. Tabori remembered that she owed her survival to a murderer.

Pauline Collins, the Irish actress best known for *Shirley Valentine*, plays Mrs. Tabori as a woman who believes that decorum will protect her, and if not, so much the worse for the world. The film's dialogue is in German, and in the cast list at the end, the name of the woman who dubbed Collins's dialogue is given next to hers—an apt idea. Ulrich Tukur, a German actor of note, plays the officer who has no fissure in discipline but who is glad of intelligent company on the return to Budapest—and who pays for it, so to speak, by going to the toilet.

My Mother's Courage had its U.S. film-theater premiere at the Film Forum in New York, which means that we must once again be grateful to the Forum for showing a film that plushier theaters declined. This gratitude is often due, too, to the Anthology Film Archives in New York and, I'm sure, to similar film theaters throughout the country. As with Broadway and with mainstream book publishing, only potential smash hits are wanted. Smaller, less moneyed film theaters, which were always valuable, have become the chief links for this country with much of the good work being done at home and abroad. Strength to them all. •

The Facts And The Feelings

BY ALAN WOLFE

America in Black and White: One Nation, Indivisible by Stephan Thernstrom and Abigail Thernstrom

(Simon and Schuster, 704 pp., \$32.50)

A Country of Strangers: Blacks and Whites in America by David K. Shi

(Alfred A. Knopf, 640 pp., \$30)

As if written to collide with each other, two huge books have appeared that advance radically different interpretations of the state of race in America. David Shi, the author of a book on Arabs and Jews and a book on Russia, has returned to the United States after years as a foreign correspondent. He engages in “an act of discovery . . . a personal quest” to explain how “a white person who had grown up in privilege” reacts to a country “where racist thoughts and images are quieter, subtler, insidious.” Stephan Thernstrom and Abigail Thernstrom—the one a Harvard historian and renowned student of ethnicity, the other a fellow at the Manhattan Institute—conclude that America has experienced dramatic improvement in its racial agony since Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma* (1944).

These accounts not only differ in their conclusions, they differ also in how they reach them. Shi's method is subjectivity: he allows those with whom he speaks, including his own children, to speak through him to the rest of America. Empathic and emotional, Shi writes as a revivalist preacher, asking white people to look into their souls and to change their ways. The Thernstroms believe that it is not people's feelings that are important, but, as Marxists used to say, objective conditions. They are no Marxists, but they are certainly objectivists, and they write as social scientists, assembling data, weighing evidence, testing ideas. Shi sometimes turns to numbers, and the Thernstroms occasionally get passionate; but you would be hard pressed to find two books that go about the same task in such dramatically different ways.

For this reason, the appearance of these books is a fine occasion for a reck-

oning. Contrasting Shi and the Thernstroms yields answers to the question of how much progress America has made on the racial front, answers that have important political implications; but it also yields answers to the question of how we make judgments about the extent of such progress. The question of method should never be neglected. The president has asked us to have a national dialogue on race. Before people can talk to each other, however, they must have some way of verifying the truth of what they are saying. If people will not agree on method, they will not agree on substance.

Here is a story about method. As Shi describes it, Roger Wilkins, a journalist and a historian who teaches at George Mason University, bumps into Senator John Danforth in the lobby of the Senate office building. “Hello Senator,” he says to him, “I'm Roger Wilkins.” The senator, used to this kind of greeting, takes his hand and responds: “Hello, Roger.” Wilkins is offended. Whites, he believes, too often belittle blacks; and calling a distinguished-looking professional such as himself by his first name is a sure sign of racism. But Danforth is a politician, Shi responds. He would call anyone, white or black, by his first name. Not so, responds Wilkins.

After this incident, Shi encounters the senator. “Hello, Senator Danforth,” he says, holding out his hand. “I'm David Shi.” “Hello, David,” responds Danforth. The obvious conclusion is that Danforth has been offered a test of racism and, to his credit, has flunked it. But Wilkins is unconvinced. Since whites once held blacks in conditions of second-class citizenship, he tells Shi, Danforth should have known better. The only way that Danforth could prove his lack of racism would be to call him

Mr. Wilkins. Shipler never says what he thinks of Wilkins's reasoning. But he trusts Wilkins as "insightful," and he tells the reader that he relied on him as an expert in "the nuances of black-white miscommunication."

Shipler is a journalist, but here he aspires to be a microsociologist of race relations. He focuses on the everyday interactions, the casual conversations, the daily rituals of contact between blacks and whites in America. The underlying theme of his book is that whites, having witnessed the passing of macro-racism in the form of legal segregation, believe that racial justice has been all but achieved, whereas blacks, witnessing micro-racism everywhere around them, believe the opposite. This difference in perception permeates everything: language, deportment, manners, memory, sex, morality, cognition, style. Whites, rarely thinking about racism, walk around self-confident, open, innocent—and oblivious to the myriad ways they offend black sensitivities. Blacks, thinking about racism all the time, become defensive and suspicious, withdrawing into racial exclusion or proclaiming racial pride.

Now, America desperately needs a microsociology of race relations. One can only wonder what Erving Goffman, if he were still alive, would make of the daily interactions between blacks and whites in our inflamed and hypersensitive racial environment. But the very mention of Goffman's name reminds us how few have the skills to penetrate the secrets of the games that people play with each other, especially about race. David Shipler does not possess those skills. Indeed, he commits two mistakes that distort his sentimental tour through these minefields.

Shipler's first mistake is that he approaches his interviews knowing what he wants people to say. Consider Nancy Deuchler, who is the black manager of a B. Dalton's bookstore in Chicago. Every now and then a white person will approach her and ask to speak to the manager. When she responds that they are speaking to the manager, they are often taken aback. But only for an instant: "... then they would just get over that and deal with me," she tells Shipler. "I have no problems, I've never had problems." Here is a case that undermines Shipler's thesis that for black Americans racial insult is omnipresent. But he will not be dissuaded. "Still," he manages to conclude, "she mentioned it." As if a person being interviewed for a book about race is going to bring up the subject of mountain biking! And off he goes to tell the stories of other

African Americans whose experiences with whites are less positive. Goffman taught microsociology to search for the unexpected, for the jarring incident that forces the conclusion that reality is always more complicated than we are prepared to admit. Shipler is so persuaded that he understands reality that he cannot hear those who are telling him that he is wrong.

Shipler's second mistake is to over-empathize with his subjects. He simply cannot look his friend in the face and say, "You know, Roger, you were completely wrong about Danforth." It is not Shipler's task, as he understands it, to point out the error of others' ways, especially if they are black. The empathic scribe records, he does not criticize. True, Shipler exposes the factual inaccuracies of some of the more extreme versions of Afrocentrism, such as Portland's *Baseline Essays*, but he also implores white Americans to understand why it is so important for black Americans to claim ancient Egypt as their own. No such empathy is shown for Afrocentrism's critics. They are engaged in "a backlash of defensive outrage," people who "sneer at any Afrocentric 'facts' that violate what they think they know" and as a result express "contempt" for leading Afrocentric thinkers such as Molefi Kete Asante.

The best ethnographers bend over backwards to avoid excessive identification with their subjects. They know that understanding requires distance. Shipler holds instead to what the professors call a "standpoint epistemology": how you understand the world is directly tied to your place in the world. Wittingly or not, Shipler is a party to the fashionable assault on objectivity. When it comes to race, certainly, there is never, in Shipler's view, one truth about a specific situation; there are at least two truths, and perhaps more. Since only blacks can know the truth of black pain, ethnographic distance is impossible. Whites and blacks perceive different truths, and so whites must give blacks the benefit of the epistemological doubt.

From Shipler's perspective, there is one place that we are particularly forbidden to enter in our flawed attempts to establish truth, and that is history. For blacks and whites think about the past in different ways. White Americans have "short memories," but "black America ... feels the reverberations of slavery, yearns for roots, searches for pride, and reaches back to grasp at ancient uncertainties." Shipler talked to an African American student at Colgate who, on his dean's advice, takes two sets of notes in his courses. One is based on the "white

lies" told by his teachers—Socrates was Greek, Columbus discovered America—which he duly recounts to pass the tests he had to pass. The other, Afrocentric in texture, is designed "to keep your own sanity." "You got to lie, you can't tell the truth," a University of Nebraska student told Shipler. "He reminded me," he comments, "of the freethinking Soviet students I had known, who had learned one set of facts around the kitchen table but knew what they were required to say in school."

But those Soviet students were right: they were being fed lies. Shipler's African American students are wrong. Had Socrates not been Greek, as Mary Lefkowitz has pointed out, surely a xenophobic Athenian would have mentioned it. And it is not only the fanciful adherents of Afrocentrism who are misled by false historical accounts. One of Shipler's respondents waxes nostalgically for the segregated schools of the South. "Since white schools didn't hire blacks with Ph.D.'s, a lot of them were teaching in predominantly black schools," this sociologist told him. "Yes, it was segregated," a vice-principal in Chicago reflects. "Yes, the books were probably five years old, but they were wonderful books—Carter G. Woodson and that kind of thing," he says, referring to one of the leaders of the revival of interest in black history.

Actually, as the Thernstroms point out, Jim Crow schools were "dreadful." They deliberately tried to keep black students ignorant of the world. When Myrdal toured the South in the late 1930s, one-third of the teachers in Southern black schools lacked even a high-school degree. Horace Mann Bond administered the Stanford Achievement Test to black public school teachers in Alabama in 1931 and found their scores below the national norm for ninth graders. Nor were these schools examples of black pride in miniature: Myrdal visited one in which not a single black student had heard of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People or W.E.B. DuBois, though one student did recognize Booker T. Washington as "a big white man." Shipler's vice-principal dates his experience in the segregated South to 1952, and it may have been the case that at that time, determined to head-off the Supreme Court, white legislators had set about improving black schools in the South. But none of this is considered by Shipler. He seems to think that if his black respondents believed things were better under Jim Crow, then better they must have been.

In his effort to posit divergent racial styles of recall, Shipler appears to sug-

gest that for black Americans facts do not matter. Not all of his respondents agree. Levi Nwachuka, a Nigerian historian at Pennsylvania's Lincoln University, was appalled that not a single one of his students could identify an African country on a blank map of Africa. Maybe, he gently suggested to Shipler, his students would be better off with more facts and fewer myths? To which Shipler contrasts the view of Haki Madhubuti, a poet and publisher in Chicago: "I can claim anything in Africa I want." Shipler himself is not the best of historians; he predates Boston's busing controversy by eight years, for example. Perhaps that explains why he seems so indifferent to the tragedy of students so cruelly stripped of the capacity of learning how the world around them came to be.

History, for Shipler, has a primarily therapeutic function. It allows blacks to believe in things that give them pride, even in things that never happened. It gives whites an opportunity for redemption. Visiting Somerset Place, a North Carolina plantation once run by the slave-owning Collins family, Shipler encounters John Graham, a Duke University administrator who is a descendant of the Collins clan. Graham is actively involved in reconstructing the plantation and regularly attends the gatherings organized there by descendants of the slaves. He expected resentment from them, but he found that "people were really very easily engaged ... There really was an opportunity for dialogue and a relationship." Of course, Graham himself never owned slaves. Still, he tells Shipler, "I suspect that if I had lived in those times and been in their shoes, I would have been a slave-owner too."

Shipler is attracted to Graham because he wrestles with his responsibility for racism, "something few whites do." Yet what can responsibility mean in this context? Graham cannot undo what his ancestors did and the descendants of the victims cannot forgive him, since there is nothing to forgive. No doubt Graham is a very sincere man, but there is actually little "wrestling" going on here; each side plays its assigned role in the drama of race relations, drawing the appropriate therapeutic conclusions from history without ever confronting the reality of the history that they are discussing.

For Shipler, racial justice will not occur in America until the entire country has experienced one massive sensitivity training session. Whites "rarely know how their behavior is perceived, how their comments are taken, how their actions may be subtly shaped by latent biases." Blacks have no monopoly on the ruth, Shipler concludes, but "they can teach white Americans how to examine

themselves, how to interpret their own attitudes, how to gain self-knowledge." The trouble is that "there is much that is deeply buried, and unless we work at digging it up for inspection, we remain strangers to ourselves as well as to each other." We can learn to talk to one another, but we have to learn to cry on one another's shoulders first.

Stephan Thernstrom and Abigail Thernstrom see very little to cry over in contemporary America's race relations. Like Shipler, they turn somewhat didactically to history for lessons. But whereas the tender-minded Shipler knows all he needs to know about the present and looks to the past for catharsis, the tough-minded Thernstroms insist that the more we learn about the past, the better we will be able to make judgments about the present. If things have gotten worse, then radical steps may be necessary to further racial justice. If they have gotten better, then it is time to rethink the way we consider race.

The Thernstroms maintain that things have gotten better. They comb census data, public opinion polls, and the research of other social scientists to come up with tidbits such as these: in the 1980s the rate of suburbanization

for blacks was four times what it was for whites; forty percent of African Americans consider themselves middle class; some whites express a dislike for blacks, but in far lower proportions than Bulgarians express for Turks, East Germans for Poles, or Russians for Azerbaijanis; schools attended by minority students generally receive more public funding than schools which are not; the income gap between Jews and Gentiles is nearly twice that between whites and blacks; a greater proportion of whites convicted of murder are handed the death sentence compared with blacks; blacks have not been admitted to the University of Mississippi in proportion to their percentage of the state's population, but their graduation rate is roughly equal to that of whites.

Behind such numbers, they argue, lie profound changes in America's racial fabric. In politics, the number of black office holders increased from 1,469 in 1970 to 8,406 in 1995. Black mayors have been elected in Dayton, Cincinnati, Grand Rapids, Pontiac, Boulder, Roanoke, Little Rock, Hartford, and Dallas, among other cities. Once invisible in Southern legislatures, 312 black Americans served in them by 1993. On the national level, "the Democratic Party would have lost every presidential

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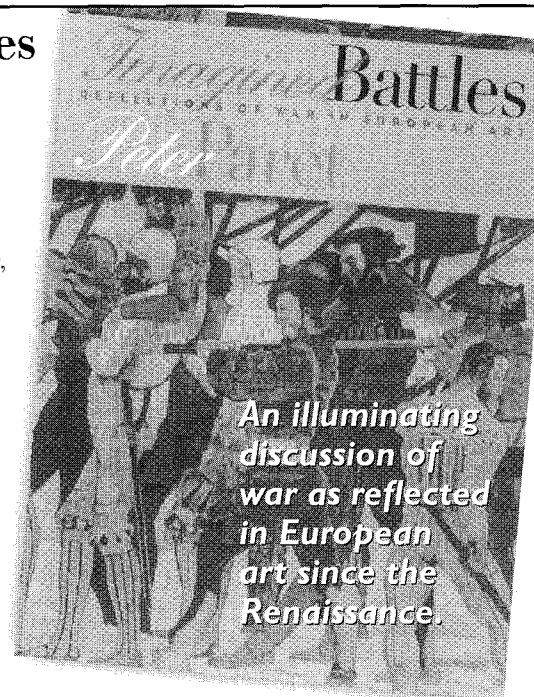
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election from 1968 to the present if only whites had been allowed to vote." Racist campaigns have all but disappeared in America "because they cost votes."

The same kind of progress can be seen in the growth of the black middle class. Economic achievement is linked to schooling. In 1960, the percentage of whites who attended college (17.4 per cent) was more than twice that of blacks (7.2 per cent). By 1995, a gap still existed (49.0 per cent for whites, 37.5 per cent for blacks), but it had significantly narrowed. And with it, so has the income gap. Black males now earn 67 per cent of what white males earn, up from 41 per cent in 1940; and the figures for black females are even higher. If we compare the median income of intact black families with intact white families, blacks make 87 per cent of what whites make. 31.9 per cent of blacks in America now live in the suburbs, compared to 15 per cent in 1950. 42 per cent of all black households in America own their own home, still below the 69 per cent of whites, but more than twice the proportion reported by Myrdal in 1944.

The Thernstroms spend considerable energy demolishing the prediction of the Kerner Commission in 1968 that racism would create two nations in America, separate and unequal. The Kerner Commission never anticipated immigration, which brought new life to America's inner cities. It was unable to imagine that white flight from the cities would someday be equalled by black flight. The dire warnings of the Kerner Commission begin to approximate to reality only in some cities, especially formerly industrial ones in the Midwest such as Detroit. The great bulk of urban growth in America since 1968, however, took place in cities such as San Jose and Phoenix, where the black population was, and still is, relatively small. Some residential segregation, persists, moreover, because blacks want it that way. In sum, "by every possible measure ... the residential separation of blacks and whites in the United States has diminished substantially over the past three decades."

Is the Thernstroms' positive interpretation of these trends justified? It is not, after all, as if they come to the subject without opinions; they are both known as right-of-center participants in the debates about race. They do not hide their political views in their book, and they acknowledge support from the same kind of conservative funding sources that supported Charles Murray and Dinesh D'Souza. Yet nothing in the Thernstroms' work resembles the work of Murray or D'Souza. The Thernstroms criticize the conservative "see no evil"

view as well as the left's "going nowhere picture of black America and white racial attitudes." They rarely rely on rhetoric or polemic to make points, preferring arguments about data. If they cannot draw a conclusion, they do not draw one: when they discuss why black SAT scores have declined since 1988, they admit to being "stumped." And when there is bad news to report, findings that run against the grain of their positive story, they generally report it. They note, for example, that in spite of the narrowing of the income gap between blacks and whites, there remains a huge gap in the accumulation of wealth. They record the depressing news that whites think that 32 per cent of the American population is black. And they are fully aware that black poverty—a state in which 29 percent of African Americans find themselves, triple the rate among whites—remains "the single most depressing fact about the state of black America today."

Still, the Thernstroms sometimes read the data as they would prefer to read them. Take that "depressing" news about black poverty. They contend that it is not racism that explains why black poverty persists; rather, "it is family structure that largely divides the haves from the have-nots in the black community." In 1959, 61 per cent of children in intact families were poor compared to 13 per cent in 1995. Today very few Americans who hold full-time jobs—white or black, male or female—live below the poverty level. Black poverty is therefore primarily due to an increase in the number of single mothers. Since 1987, the Thernstroms point out, fertility and marriage have been negatively correlated among blacks; that is to say, the birth rate among married black women was lower than the birth rate for unmarried black women, "the first time that has happened for any ethnic group." This is truly an astonishing trend, and the Thernstroms are right to confer such significance upon it. And yet I see no reason to conclude that racial discrimination no longer plays a significant role in perpetuating higher poverty rates among blacks than whites.

Those who believe that discrimination is still a powerful force in American life often cite "audit studies" in which equally matched black and white job applicants will present themselves to unsuspecting vendors or employers. Three such studies are reviewed by the Thernstroms. A Denver study in 1991 showed no substantial differences between black and white testers; a Chicago study in 1990 indicated that whites were preferred over blacks twice as often as blacks were preferred

over whites; and a Washington, D.C. study in 1990 found that whites were chosen over blacks in 20 percent of the cases while blacks were preferred over whites in 5 percent, a four-fold preference for the one group over the other.

One conclusion to be drawn is that Chicago seems the typical case, with Washington atypical because discrimination there was so high and Denver atypical because it was so low. Yet the Thernstroms dismiss the Chicago results as based on too small a sample, and they criticize the Washington results for concentrating on private employers when the public sector is so large in the capital. Now, it is always possible to find fault with studies such as these. That is how social scientists make their living. Yet who can deny that some racial discrimination in employment still exists? Indeed, the Thernstroms are careful to say as much. Since they find any such discrimination abhorrent, one wonders why the Thernstroms are so reluctant to display a little more empathy toward those who are refused jobs through no fault of their own.

Another potential indication of the persistence of discrimination by race involves housing. "The residential separation of the races is one of the most conspicuous features of the typical American metropolis today," the Thernstroms correctly point out. But how much of that separation is caused by discrimination? Not much, they answer. They discuss a study which showed that black buyers and renters were shown 25 percent fewer available properties than whites and that roughly one out of ten black testers were steered to primarily black neighborhoods. "These figures do not seem high enough to support the claim that patterns of exclusion are the norm rather than the exception." But the question is not whether discrimination is the norm. The question is whether discrimination at the margins can have substantial effects on the persistence of residential segregation.

For the Thernstroms, it cannot. Demand, in their view, is sovereign; bias resides in customer preferences, not in manipulations of supply. "The 'steering' metaphor is misleading in its implication that real estate agents are in the driver's seat, and that they take their clients to destinations they would not have chosen on their own," they conclude. "The agents are more like taxi-drivers; they turn the wheel, control the gas pedal and the brakes, but the customer decides where the vehicle is headed." Yet housing is not governed by the universal logic of supply and demand but by local

customs. In Atlanta and Washington, D.C., the Thernstroms may be right: black suburbanites prefer to live in black suburbs. But what if there are no black suburbs?

In Boston, black middle-class families fleeing the city have little choice but to find housing in suburbs predominantly occupied by whites. Highly publicized incidents—such as the one in which police stopped a member of the Boston Celtics in his own suburb for no other reason than his race—have created a veritable folk culture around which suburbs are welcome to blacks and which are not. Should a relatively large number of potential black residents choose not to look for housing in those perceived as hostile—and then should there be a 10 percent rate of racial steering imposed on those who do—the result would easily turn into a nearly all-white suburb. “Biases in the real estate market certainly exist, but they appear minor compared to the biases of real estate customers themselves,” the Thernstroms write. I see nothing in their data that warrants such a sweeping conclusion.

There are occasions in which the Thernstroms’ distaste for affirmative action affects their interpretation of data. “On many accounts,” they write, “the socioeconomic gains made by African Americans in the affirmative action era have been less impressive than those that occurred before preferential policies.” Yet their own data show dramatic increases in the percentage of black doctors, lawyers and engineers between 1970 and 1990. This suggests that it is not the pace of middle class growth that matters, but the shift to more professional middle class jobs. Acknowledging this, the Thernstroms write that such a result “undoubtedly does reflect the fact that the nation’s professional schools changed their admissions standards for black applicants.” But instead of concluding that a policy they clearly do not like nonetheless had at least one positive result, they ask whether such gains are really worth the costs of affirmative action. Besides, “black practitioners of these professions make up a small fraction of the total black middle class today.” This backtracking sounds disturbingly like Roger Wilkins in reverse: if the results of the test are unacceptable, change the test.

America in Black and White is neither a work of scholarship written from no particular point of view nor a personal essay that asserts a point of view without evidence. It is a bit of both: an intervention into a public debate which asks that the criteria for resolving the debate be factual. The book’s great strength, revealed most clearly in its historical sections, is its insistence that some of our

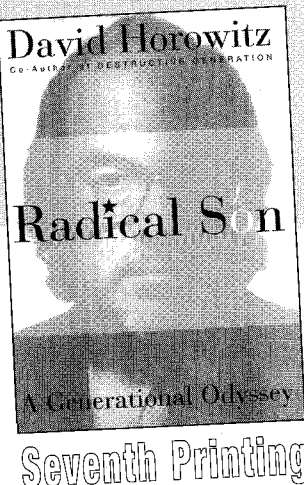
most contentious questions have answers. Its most conspicuous weakness, most prominent in its treatment of contemporary debates over federal contracts or voting rights which rely less on data collection, is that it sometimes finds those answers too predictably.

Is it possible to say anything conclusive about racial progress in America? If the empathic approach of David Shipler is too subjective and anecdotal to be trusted, the data-driven approach of the Thernstroms is neither value-free nor unambiguous. Still, this is not one of those subjects for which even-handedness is the best policy. Both of these books have flaws, but it would be wrong to conclude that neither has an advantage over the other.

Where race is concerned, it is time for facts to win out over rhetoric. One could discount by 25 percent every development that the Thernstroms discuss and still come away astonished at how radically America has changed in so short a time. Any American fifty years old has witnessed America move from a society in which most whites would never have the opportunity to interact with black people on equal terms to a society in which David Shipler’s black respondents

complain of not being able to discuss Malcolm X in a class at the Air Force Academy, of finding King Kong racist, of meeting whites curious about their braids, of worrying about losing their street jargon if they attend suburban high schools, and of being refused service in a Princeton eating club. The notion that we live in the same old racist America—“as segregated now as it was in 1954,” as President Franklyn Jennifer of Howard University said in 1992—is absurd.

As if it were not enough in one lifetime to have abolished legal segregation, America has also made dramatic progress in matters closer to the heart. Shipler relates the occasional rudeness experienced by interracial couples; but the Thernstroms point out a dramatic increase in interracial marriage from 0.7 percent of all new marriages by African Americans in 1963 to 12.1 percent in 1993. Shipler asks white Americans to recognize the lurking racism in the way they think about crime; but the Thernstroms discuss data showing that blacks are more fearful of crime than whites. Shipler tells tales of isolation and separation; but the Thernstroms report data showing huge increases in black and white social contact—churches, friendships, neighborhoods—since the 1960s.



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Taken together, the data assembled by the Thernstroms paint a picture of progress on enough fronts that the methodological questions can once and for all be resolved: race relations have improved dramatically in America, and those who believe otherwise are wrong.

Of course, people may agree that great progress has been made toward racial equality and still disagree about how much remains or about what ought to be done. Shipler, and those who think like him, continue to adhere to what can be called "black exceptionalism." This way of thinking suggests that all groups in America have to obey the same rules, except blacks. To those who feel that African Americans need special legislative districts or separate admissions committees for professional schools, Shipler adds the idea that blacks are also exceptional in their feelings. I find this notion of an apartheid of the mind repellent. It reverberates with discredited theories that how we think or feel is inextricably linked to the genes that we happen to have. And it does something that a liberal polity ought never to do: it probes too deeply into feelings. Shipler declares that "this is the ideal: to search your attitudes, identify your stereotypes, and correct for them as you go about your daily

duties." His language reminds me of China's thought police, and leaves my blood running cold.

Black exceptionalism, as the Thernstroms' history makes clear, grew out of demands for "black power" that came to dominate the civil rights movement after the riots of the 1960s. In retrospect, the problematic term in that demand is not "black," it is "power." Our society can tolerate expressions of black pride just as it tolerates expressions of Jewish pride or Italian pride. But it also requires that our politics be held together by something more than power. No group in our society—no matter how small, no matter how victimized—can ever be permitted to believe that it can have a slice of power to itself, beyond the scrutiny and the checks of others. That applies as much to the power of sympathy as it does to political power. Black exceptionalism in politics corrupts democracy. A black exceptionalism of the emotions is not a recipe for understanding. It is a license for psychological blackmail.

Or so one of Shipler's examples demonstrates. In the most pathetic moment in his book, he describes one of those workshop exercises so favored by diversity trainers these days. Each person

in the room was asked to walk about and choose the person most different from himself. Shipler and a young black woman found each other. How many of you, the facilitator asked the entire group, have considered not having children because of racism? Not only did Shipler's partner stand, but so did a dozen or so other women, mostly black and Latino. "Since my children are my fondest joy," Shipler writes, "I cannot imagine many sadnesses more profound than this." Give me a break. Either the women who stood were indulging in an emotional theatricality that cost them nothing or they were sincere. If the former, then they may fool the Shiplers of the world, but they are unlikely to persuade anyone with even a modicum of common sense. If the latter, then they have a problem that not even the complete elimination of white racism will help them solve.

When President Clinton called for a national conversation on race, my first reaction was indifference: commissions rarely do any good, but they rarely do any harm. Having read Shipler, I am now convinced that a national conversation on race can be downright harmful. For Shipler shows why the current craving for dialogue is actually just another form of black exceptionalism. Any good conversation presupposes equality among the speakers; each has something to say and is expected to say it. But the "dialogue" that Shipler urges goes only one way: the self-designated victims are given the right to lecture all and sundry, in any way they want, on any topic they choose, based on the supposition that contrary opinions do not constitute legitimate disagreement but examples of the very kinds of racism the conversation was called into being to stop. This is talk to end all talk, a conversation designed to shut people up and shut people in.

What Shipler thinks of as heartfelt dialogue and profound conversation strikes me as demeaning to all sides. His examples paint a picture of black America represented not by those who have struggled against persistent discrimination to make it, but by those who, in insisting that black success is impossible in racist America, send out a message of numbing resignation. And his white America is symbolized not by those who have taken dramatic strides to move beyond the racism of their parents' generation, but by those so ashamed of themselves that they take pleasure in confessing to sins they never committed. When black self-pity meets white self-hatred, we are better off not speaking.

The Thernstroms, one presumes, are

Friends

for David Schatz

Picnics in the woods behind the Institute;
Evenings in the garden at Madoo, or the farm in Spring Green;
The loft on Prince Street; four apartments in Chelsea
And Cambridge, and the house in Sarasota—

These used to make the world seem feasible and small,
As though the shape it took, and what the future would hold,
Could be composed of what the past already knew,
And contained within the covers of an address book.

It isn't still a premise, or that central thing
That E.M. Forster once hoped he might betray his country for.
It isn't—to use that awful word—a "value" anymore.
Yet people live in one another's minds,

In one another's company at dinner, in the annual,
Late night calls on New Year's Eve. Scared of being alone,
Alone at the end; gathering the remnants of those singular occasions
Like a cloak or a shawl, drawing its raveled sleeve

Against a universe oblivious to care—
Is *this* how friendship tends? Where affection leads?
Night falls behind a screen of willow trees
And on the upland pasture, where their wistful images abide,

Sidling into view, brightening for a moment
Through the terrifying sheen around the narrow corridor of sight,
As the years narrow into a lengthening corridor of
Absence, and the darkness of their absence.

JOHN KOETHE

not big on talk. They offer the implicit message that, while intellectuals complain about our lack of racial equality, ordinary people of both races are simply making it happen. They do not conclude that we have reached a state of genuine racial equality or that we no longer need the Civil Rights Act. They do suggest that we should start treating African Americans as an ethnic group trying to make its breakthrough in pluralist America and stop treating them as a racial group confronting persistent discrimination.

I am more cautious than the Thern-

stroms. I would not go as far in claiming that color-blind public policies and continued economic growth will produce the further progress in racial equality that our society requires. Yet I think that they are right to insist that what has most characterized discussions of race in the United States is a "lack of analytic rigor," and that this has permitted a remarkable amount of demagoguery to pass as serious thinking. For this reason, their tough-minded book serves the cause of racial justice. It shows that the issue is not whether black exceptionalism should end. The issue is when. •

Beneath The Waves

BY JAMES WOOD

Virginia Woolf by Hermione Lee

(Knopf, 893 pp., \$39.95)

There is a story that the young Virginia Woolf and others visited Rodin's studio in 1904. The sculptor told the party that they could touch anything except the figures still under sheets. When Woolf began to unwrap one of the sculptures, Rodin slapped her.

Perhaps the story is apocryphal; but like the grave of an unknown soldier, we can use it as the uncertain emblem of a visible struggle. Woolf's literary struggle was to uncover figures, in a way that they had not before been denuded. She unwrapped consciousness. To do this, she would have to disobey the generation that stood behind her, its slapping hand outstretched like Rodin's. Hermione Lee, Woolf's best biographer, tells the anecdote in a chapter titled "Madness." Woolf was on the edge of an attack of mental instability, and this incident may be an example of high nerves. But there is also such a thing as the madness of art.

The modernist Virginia Woolf, the writer betrothed to a grand project, is the Woolf who matters. "Bloomsbury," that big floral distraction, has obscured her. For she was much more serious, much more seriously literary, than her celebrated friends and relatives, who look nowadays like mere threads of "promise." The academy stunts the achievement of Woolf's writing by offering a general pardon to all of it; or by converting literary questions into political ones. Thus *The Waves* becomes an example of the

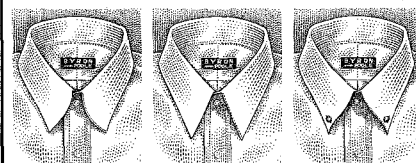
"postcolonial carnivalesque," according to Jane Marcus. But postcolonialism, even feminism, would have happened without Woolf; whereas her fiction would not. The writer—single, snobbish, new, rare—can be found in her great essays; in her diaries, with their combination of sharp wail and steady literary appetite; and in her best novels, *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and *The Waves* (1931). This is the Woolf that Hermione Lee puts at the center of her great biography.

Lee's biography, the most distinguished study of Woolf yet, is a model of how to do it. That is, she proves that literary biography should not exist unless it acts like literary criticism. Lee knows that, in the case of a writer as determined as Woolf, life is a mound of sacrifices to the work, and as the writer gets older, this mound becomes more and more pointed—everything is homaged to, or otherwise a distraction from, the work. Woolf's diaries, which are full of bright interruption, read increasingly like this throughout the 1920s and '30s. Accordingly, Lee is always most interested in how Woolf turned her life into writing. Bloomsbury's capillaries do not interest her very much. Instead, she shuffles through Woolf's texts, using a combination of chronology and thematic analysis (chapters titled "Leonard," "Reading," "Fascism," and so on).

Lee begins with a rich evocation of Woolf's childhood, and this evocation plunges into a text, a ninety page mem-

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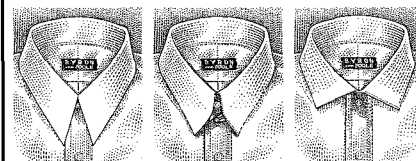
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oir called "A Sketch of the Past." Woolf wrote it in 1939 and 1940, just before she took her life. In it, she looked again at the origins of her literary rebellion, which she found in the impress of her parents, and in the thick air of the family home, at Hyde Park Gate in West London. Virginia Stephen was born in 1882, into the very riot of Victorianism. Her writing would offer an insubordination to the sure captaincy of the Victorians.

They were exemplified by her mother, Julia Stephen, whom Virginia complicatedly loved, and her father, Leslie Stephen, whom she complicatedly hated. Julia Stephen was a Victorian idealization of the wife and mother. She was unselfish, an emotional wetnurse to her husband, and devoted to good works outside the home. When Virginia started writing book reviews in 1905, she felt the ghost of her mother (who had died in 1895) warning her to be femininely decorous, and to soothe male reputations. Woolf, characteristically, wrote at this time that "my real delight in reviewing is to say nasty things."

Leslie Stephen became Mr. Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse*, the needy monolith surrounded by the poor pebbles of his battered family. He was one of those Victorians who seem to us like portable zeitgeists. He was one of the most important agnostics of his generation, a vigorous literary critic, a Cambridge rationalist, the author of *The History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*. Carlyle and Arnold were his friends. Browning and Henry James visited him. Stephen had a grinding, puritanical mind. "He would ask what was the cube root of such and such a number; for he always worked out mathematical problems on railway tickets," wrote Woolf in "A Sketch of the Past." Woolf selects one sharp memory which gives us a picture of difficult pleasure. She remembers him stooping from his intellectual labors to mend his little daughter's sailboat, and snorting in embarrassment, "Absurd!—what fun it is doing this."

In *To the Lighthouse*, Mr. Ramsay, who is a philosopher, is seen struggling to get

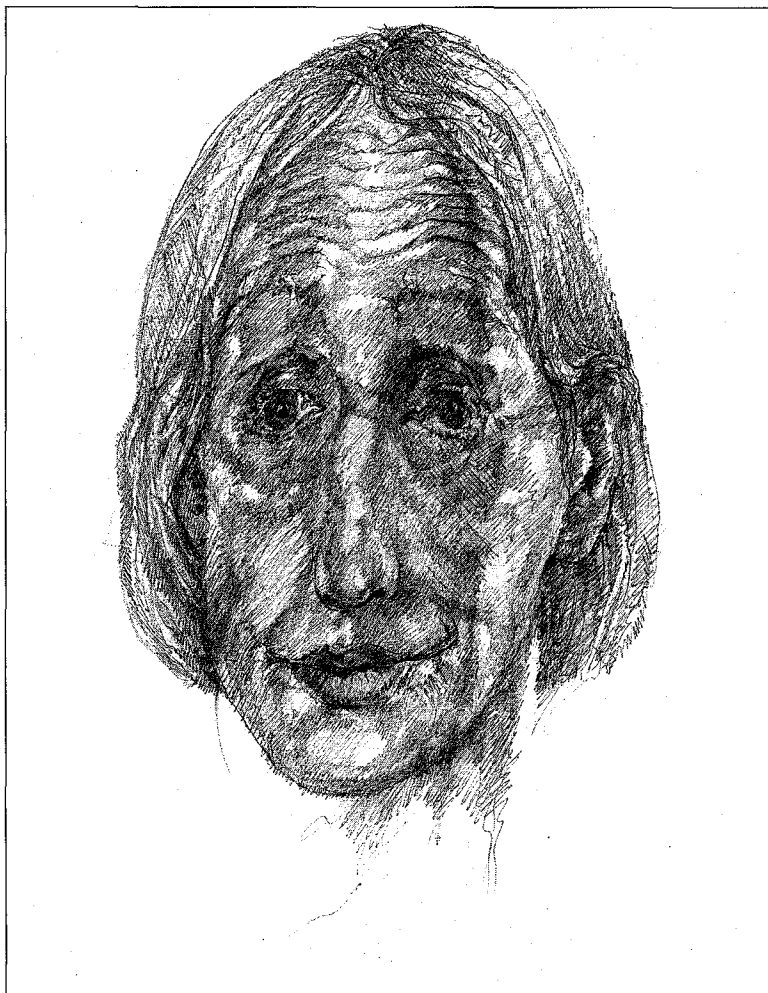
beyond the letter Q in the intellectual alphabet. It is one of Woolf's most beautiful metaphors: "It was a splendid mind. For if thought is like the keyboard of a piano, divided into so many notes, or like the alphabet ... then his splendid mind had no sort of difficulty in running over those letters one by one, firmly and accurately, until it had reached, say, the letter Q. He reached Q. Very few people in the whole of England ever reach Q ... But after Q? What comes next?" Leslie Stephen acted like a genius, but he thought like a merely gifted man. His

from him in his own shallow waters. The way she summed up his limitations would be the way she pounced on the limitations of a whole class of people. Repeatedly, one comes across these portraits in her diaries. Her father was the model "insider." He was an institution, which could be abbreviated to "Eton-Cambridge," places from which she was excluded. Such people were what she called "Romans" (whereas she was Greek). They kept the Empire spinning, politically and intellectually. But in her father she found "not a subtle mind; not an imaginative mind; not a suggestive mind." (Stephen's truest contemporary is that supple but flat insider Noel Annan, who wrote his biography.)

Leslie Stephen can be caricatured (though Woolf never did this, and Lee is fair and vivid). Yet the education that he gave his daughter was deep. Virginia Stephen did not go out of the house to school. Her childhood was violently isolated, and spent in the shadow of her father, who expected that Virginia would "become an author in time." She ran through the battery of his books. He read, of course, to the collected family—all thirty-two Waverley novels of Scott, Carlyle's *The French Revolution*, Jane Austen, and the English poets. But Woolf's own reading, under her father's tutelage, constituted her real education.

It was like a less heated version of John Stuart Mill's upbringing. She read Greek—Plato, of course—with Walter

Pater's sister. Leslie Stephen gave her history and biography. In 1897, when she was fifteen, he chose for her Pepys's *Diary*, Arnold's *History of Rome*, Campbell's *Life of Coleridge*, Macaulay's *History*, Carlyle's *Reminiscences*, and *Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography* by James Stephen her grandfather. We see Woolf developing that deep, secretive relationship with language that often characterizes the solitary child. "I have spotted the best lines in the play," she wrote to her brother, Thoby, who was at Cambridge. "Now if that doesn't send a shiver down your spine ... you are no true Shakespearean!"



VIRGINIA WOOLF BY DAVID SCHORR FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

tantrums, his loud groaning about the difficulty of mental activity, his domestic helplessness, his virile activity (a ten-mile walk was a splinter), the intellectual fez that he wore on his head (which looks like the opposite of a dunce's cap), the foaming beard: all this was sanctioned by the age. It was how "great men" acted. But Stephen once confessed to his daughter, with his admirable honesty, that he had only "a good second-class mind," and Woolf wrote: "He had I think no feeling for pictures; no ear for music; no sense of the sound of words."

Unwittingly, her father trained her in hostility, taught her how to float away

Woolf's background, like a patronymic, was something that marked her publicly. She lived for twenty-two years in her father's house, and escaped only when he died in 1904. This was her first escape—out of Hyde Park Gate and into Bloomsbury, where she lived with her brothers and sister, in Gordon Square. Her second escape was into literary journalism. Here Lee might have provided a little more discussion. For Woolf became a great critic, not simply a "great reviewer." The *Collected Essays*, which are still being edited, represent the most substantial body of criticism in English in this century. They belong in the tradition of Johnson, Coleridge and Henry James. That is, her essays and her reviews are a writer's criticism, written in the language of art, which is the language of metaphor.

Of course, all of Woolf's work is a kind of tattoo peeled off the English poets and rubbed onto her sentences; all of it is poetically metaphorical. But these early experiments encouraged the tendency toward metaphor found in all her fictional work. In her criticism, the language of metaphor becomes a way of speaking to fiction in its own accent, the only way of respecting fiction's indescribability. It is a language of forceful hesitation. Its force lies in the vigor and the originality of Woolf's metaphors; its hesitation lies in its admission that, in the world of criticism, a region of pure summation does not exist. In this sense, literary criticism can never offer a successful summation, though it always strives to; for it is too proximate to its subject. It shares its language. All criticism is metaphorical in movement, because it is interested in likeness. It asks: what is art *like*? What does it resemble? If the artwork describes itself, then criticism's purpose is to redescribe the artwork in its own, different language. But literature and literary criticism (unlike music and art and their criticisms) share the same language, and thus to redescribe literature is, in some sense, not to redescribe it but to describe it again, but for the first time. It is to share in making literature. Woolf's language acknowledges, joyfully, that the critic's re-description of a novel cannot contain that novel, but only partake of its impalpabilities.

The language of metaphor is the language of secret sharing, of approximation, of likeness—and of competition. For, as a critic, Woolf is always in competition with what she is reviewing; the proximity of her language constitutes a luxurious squabble. Again and again, her metaphors are used to deliver a judgment that marks both her nearness—her ability to use an artistic language—and

her distance. E. M. Forster (who was a friend), she writes, is too fidgety as a novelist, always stepping in to talk about his characters: "he is like a light sleeper who is always being woken by something in the room." Dickens, she felt, rather vulgarly made excitement by inventing new, disposable characters: "Dickens makes his books blaze up not by tightening the plot or sharpening the wit, but by throwing another handful of people upon the fire." George Moore, a friend of her father's, was too literary a novelist: "Literature has wound itself about him like a veil, forbidding the free use of his limbs."

Many of her essays were written for the *TLS*, whose contributions were then unsigned. This anonymity was ideal: surely Woolf knew that her prose would sign itself. So her essays, in texture and in content, were self-advertisements. Between 1917 and 1925, she produced the delicate manifestos that insisted on the break that her generation, the Georgians, must make with the Edwardians. Her generation, as she defined it, meant Lawrence, Joyce, Forster, Eliot. The Edwardians were Shaw, Galsworthy, Wells, Arnold Bennett. In "Modern Novels" (1919), "On Re-Reading Novels," "Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown," (1923) and "Character in Fiction" (1924), she argued that character was at the center of great fiction, and that character had changed "on or about December 1910." This was a literary change. Character, to the Edwardians, was everything that could be described; for Woolf, it was everything that could not be described. The Edwardians blunted character, she felt, by stubbing it into things—clothes, politics, income, houses, relatives. She wanted to sharpen character into the invisible.

First of all, said Woolf, what was "reality"? For the Edwardians, reality was a furniture sale, everything that could be seen, tagged and marked. But Woolf wanted to break from what she called this materialism, and to look for darker corridors. Reality is "a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end." It is important to see that this new awareness was not an evaporation into the merely aesthetic. Again and again Woolf insists on her word, "life." It was because she felt that life had escaped from Bennett's novels that she punished them: "perhaps without life nothing else is worth while." She chafed at the vagueness of the word, yet its vagueness was its challenge. It was the fate of modernist writing to be merely an advance in failure, because "life" is so resistant to being broken into words. Woolf advised that this kind of writing could not be

"successful" in the way the old writing had been. "Tolerate the spasmodic, the obscure, the fragmentary, the failure," she implored her skeptical readers. "I think," she wrote in her diary, of *The Waves*, "this is the greatest opportunity I have yet been able to give myself: therefore the most complete failure."

And certainly Woolf failed from time to time: the current amnesty, which blows triumph over everything she wrote, just imprisons her in hot air. It should be possible to demonstrate that all the novels have weak passages, and to discuss the inevitable chanciness of Woolf's use of interior monologue, without encouraging the charge of being merely a masculine reader. *Mrs Dalloway* is not, in the end, as hugely suggestive as it wants to be; Woolf seemed herself to sense this. *The Waves*, a great book whose last twenty pages is a pure example of secular mystical writing, is too tediously involved in its own procedures (almost every character has something to say about the difficulty of language). *Between the Acts* seems unfinished.

But when Woolf falters, it is generally when she is being Victorian, not when she is being Georgian, or modernist. In *Mrs Dalloway*, she compares twilight in London to a woman changing her clothes for the evening, "but London would have none of it, and rushed her bayonets into the sky, pinioned her, constrained her to partnership in her revelry." In *To the Lighthouse*, she compares spring to "a virgin fierce in her chastity, scornful in her purity." In *The Waves*, she likens the sea to "a girl couched on her green-sea mattress . . . with water-globed jewels that sent lances of opal-tinted light falling and flashing in the uncertain air like the flanks of a dolphin leaping, or the flash of a falling blade." All this is too liquescent. Rebecca West thought that *The Waves* was "pre-Raphaelite kitsch," which is not true; but in all these cases a cliché of Victorian poetry seeps from Woolf's childhood into her prose and stains its pristinities.

When Woolf's prose succeeds, however, there is no other English novelist of the twentieth century who seems so native in her language. She wrote of "words with roots." She, who loved first and most dearly the Elizabethans—like Melville, she revered Sir Thomas Browne—historicizes language. She jams herself into the center of the clock of English prose. Her rarity as a prose stylist is that she has one ear open to metaphor and one ear open to adjectives and adverbs. (Melville, again, has this Shakespearean doubleness.) She enjoys the way that words, when chosen with an overpowering concentration,

begin to turn into abstractions, as anything does if it is stared at long enough. She embarrasses words into confessing their abstract pigments: words begin to seem like colors in her hands.

We see this in the fiction and in the superb descriptions in the *Diary*. Especially in the *Diary*, where she runs adjectives after each other without the cushion of commas. She looks at the Sussex landscape: "A heavy flagging windy cloudy day with breadths of sun ... Lovely are the curves of the grey clouds sweeping; and the long barns lying." Or this, in *The Waves*: "Colour returns. The day waves yellow with all its crops." From *To the Lighthouse*: "The arrow-like stillness of fine weather ... Tortoise-shell butterflies burst from the chrysalis and pattered their life out on the window-pane." And in her *Diary*, she watches people, and throws marvelous words at them: "steamy grubby inarticulate Rex Whistler." Or Mrs. Keppel, a great society hostess: "a swarthy thick set raddled direct ... old grasper." She combines words so paradoxically: "a nimble secondrate man" (this of a professor of English literature; she damned this class of professionals). Of Stephen Spender: "a loose jointed mind—misty, clouded, suffusive. Nothing has outline. Very sensitive, tremulous, receptive & striding." Of Edith Sitwell: "All is very tapering & pointed, the nose running on like a mole." Of Bunny Garnett: "that rusty surly slow old dog with his amorous ways and primitive mind." And then, amid so much uncertainty and fragility, one finds this little ecstasy, which lights up everything else: "Dear me, how lovely some parts of *The Lighthouse* are! Soft & pliable, & I think deep, & never a word wrong for a page at a time."

But Woolf disliked being complimented for her sentences, and wrote that we must go to novelists "for chapters, not for sentences." In truth, her achievement is not measured in sentences; and it is not measured in chapters either. Her break with the Edwardians lies in the way she writes about consciousness. It is here, especially in the flowing form of *To the Lighthouse*, that she did something astonishing. Most readers know Woolf, in the caricature, as a writer who allows her characters to ramble internally, moving randomly, it seems, from thinking about death at one moment to a bowl of fruit at the next. Well, the caricature goes, this was the Bloomsbury way—the soft metaphysics of the upper classes.

But Woolf's development of stream-of-consciousness is much more interesting than that. Its great accomplishment is that it allows absent-mindedness into fiction for the first time. A character is

allowed to drift out of relevance, to wander into a randomness that may be at odds with the structure of the novel as a whole. What does it mean for a character to become irrelevant to a novel? It means that characters may be freed from the fiction which grips them; it lets characters forget, as it were, that they are thicketed in a novel.

Undoubtedly, Woolf learned some of this from Chekhov, about whom she wrote in 1917, in 1918, and in 1919. There is an obvious difference between the fiction she wrote before, and after, reading Chekhov. In her first novel, *The Voyage Out* (1915), there is a moment which hangs on the verge of stream-of-consciousness. Clarissa Dalloway (who reappears ten years later in *Mrs Dalloway*) is going to sleep. She is reading Pascal and thinking drowsily about her husband. What would become a current of thought in Woolf's later books is here stopped, and converted into a dream. She falls asleep, and her dream, which is a fantastic vision of huge Greek letters, wakes her up. At which point she reminds herself that she has been dreaming. The chapter ends, and everything is closed off neatly. What is significant is that random thought, at this stage in Woolf's development, can only exist as drowsiness or as dream. It is not yet day-dreaming. In this first novel, if you forget yourself, you must fall asleep. In her best novels, you can stay awake and forget yourself.

Everything gathers in *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf's greatest novel, which she wrote in a high spasm of activity between 1925 and 1927. The philosopher Mr. Ramsay and Mrs. Ramsay are on holiday with their children. James, the youngest son, wants to take a boat to the lighthouse. There are houseguests: Charles Tansley, an atheist philosopher and former pupil of Ramsay's; Augustus Carmichael, a lazy old poet who sits all day in a deck-chair, purring lovely phrases; and Lily Briscoe, who sits on the lawn painting her "attempt at something." Woolf dances between these consciousnesses, so that it seems to be a novel in which everything happens at the same time. Clearly, all these people are thinking at the same time, as people do in real life, and the writer's struggle is to outwit narrative-sequence, whereby one is forced to describe the thought of one mind followed by the next. Sequence, at bottom, is nothing other than the materiality of words, which force us to place one word after the next, rather than on top of each other. A painter, like Lily Briscoe, can actually mix paints, but a writer cannot do this.

The closest a writer can come to this is

in the yoking of metaphor, whereby one thing is pushed against another and a flashing simultaneity is achieved. Thus we see how Woolf's inveterately metaphorical instinct, at the level of language, prompted her discovery of metaphorical narrative techniques. Even with metaphor, however, a novelist cannot literally combine five consciousnesses. But if you allow your characters to forget that they are consciousnesses, you allow the reader to forget this, too. You allow the reader to forget that fictional consciousness, with its descriptive limitations, exists at all.

This is what Woolf does with Mrs. Ramsay, three times in the book. The first moment of forgetting is the quietest and the most magnificent, and occurs twenty pages into the novel. For the first twenty pages, more or less, we see things through Mrs. Ramsay's drifting thoughts. She thinks about how much her son wants to go to the lighthouse; she is cross with Tansley for saying that the weather will not be good enough for the boat-trip; she thinks a little about Tansley, and about all her husband's camp-followers—earnest, frigid young men who like to discuss university prizes. And then a gigantic new climate begins in English fiction. Mrs. Ramsay looks out of the window at the lawn, and sees Augustus Carmichael in his chair; and then sees Lily Briscoe painting at her easel, and decides that Lily is not really a serious artist. And then Mrs. Ramsay remembers that she "was supposed to be keeping her head as much in the same position as possible for Lily's picture." Lily is painting Mrs. Ramsay.

In other words, Mrs. Ramsay has forgotten, and has only just remembered, that she is at the center of Lily's painting. And she has forgotten that she is at the center of the twenty pages we have just read. Yet Mrs. Ramsay's forgetting that she is at the center of the painting, and at the center of the first twenty pages of the novel, has itself taken twenty pages to read! We have experienced this forgetfulness with her. We have traveled with her, and in this way out of her. It as if the novel itself forgets itself, forgets that Mrs. Ramsay is a character. She has been at the center of the novel all along and we have hardly noticed it, because we have inhabited her own invisibility. She is at the center of the painting while she is not at the center.

When, in real life, we are asked by a friend what we are thinking about, we often say "nothing." Mrs. Ramsay would say the same; Woolf informs us later in the book that Mrs. Ramsay hated to be reminded that she had been seen by anyone "sitting thinking." Yet Woolf's delicate method shows us that we are never thinking about nothing, that we

are always thinking about something, that it is impossible for us not to think, even if the thought is merely the process of forgetting something. She lets her readers not only read this, but almost enact it for themselves: we experience the motions of self-forgetfulness. It is a perilous process, and some readers have decided, over the years, that it is just a maze of pretty trivia. But it is real; it brings us closer to what Woolf called "life." In her novels, thought radiates outward, as a changing town radiates outward, from a neglected center.

What so moves us in Woolf's great novels, and moves us when we picture her at work in her garden hut in Sussex—Bernard in *The Waves* refers to the "incessant unmethodical pacing" of artistic work—is the constant effort to find a meaning behind "life." Was this hidden meaning only aesthetic? Famously, she once wrote that "behind the cotton wool is hidden a pattern; that we—I mean all human beings—are connected with this... that the whole world is a work of art."

This is the formally agnostic side of Woolf that trusted in art, as Pater did, to do hazily the work of religion. Such an art would best explain the mysteries of things by, precisely, failing to explain them. In place of confident Victorian preaching was the proper stutter of art; in place of system was tangle; in place of solution was compound. Art's failure would be its new success. The more obscure the "pattern" behind reality, the more real its obscurity. Art's business was to honor this obscurity. Woolf's famous "moments of being," in this view, were indescribable clouds which only art could attempt to describe, because art was itself a moment of being. Art and reality had become one in their mystery.

Art, in this scheme, acts like ritual rather than doctrine: it cannot define truth, but it ornaments what cannot be known. "I'm certain that the only meanings that are worth anything in a work of art are those that the artist himself knows nothing about," Woolf wrote. She disliked the "mysticism" in *A Passage To India*, because she felt that Forster was an artist who did not trust enough in art alone, who "despises his art and hinks he must be something more." Thus Woolf the aesthete.

But what about Woolf the religionist? For there is evidence that Woolf, without of course despising her art, looked for "something more," and that she felt his "something more" lay beyond art. She felt herself to be "mystical." At times he appears to have been looking not so much for the aesthetic pattern behind reality, as for a further metaphysical pat-

tern behind the aesthetic pattern. What this further pattern, so savagely recessed, looked like, Woolf could not say. She could never describe it. But she suspected that she did not herself make it: it was real, it was revealed, it was given to her.

She sensed this deeper reality in her moments of mental instability. Woolf broke down, mentally, in 1897, in 1904, and most severely in 1913, when she nearly killed herself. In 1926, while finishing *To the Lighthouse*, she again became ill. She committed suicide in March, 1941—not because of the war, but because she was certain that she was about to become ill, and she could not bear it. (Lee's discussion is especially useful here.) She would have periods of feverish intensity and insight, followed by weeks of clogged depression. These bouts were terrible. Lee quotes this self-record: "Oh its beginning its coming—the horror—physically like a painful wave about the heart—tossing me up. I'm unhappy unhappy! Down—God, I wish I were dead...Wave crashes. I wish I were dead! I've only a few years to live I hope. I cant face this horror any more."

When this had passed, Woolf felt that her depression had been "interesting." She saw through to some kind of "truth" while ill. "I believe these illnesses are in my case—how shall I express it?—partly

mystical." She told Forster that her illness had "done instead of religion." She wrote that in periods of intensity, she heard "a third voice"—not hers, not her husband's, but another's. Scattered in her writings are moments of mystical feeling. Bernard, at the end of *The Waves*, does not give a Paterian account of the primacy of art (the usual reading). He undergoes a mental breakdown which is described in spiritual terms. In September 1926, she wrote of "the mystical side of this solitude; how it is not oneself but something in the universe that one's left with." She continues: "One sees a fin passing far out."

It is difficult to know whether this is a report or an approximation. Did she see a fin, a mystical bulk; or was the idea of a fin merely her acutest imagining of what that bulk resembled? Repeatedly, she complains of the difficulty of describing this reality. But it was a reality: "If I could catch the feeling, I would: the feeling of the singing of the real world, as one is driven by loneliness and silence from the habitable world."

This idea, of a real world behind the habitable world, reminds us of the Victorian Platonism in which Woolf was raised. But Woolf's version is both a fruit of, and a stone shied at, this Platonism. Woolf's father was an agnostic and a

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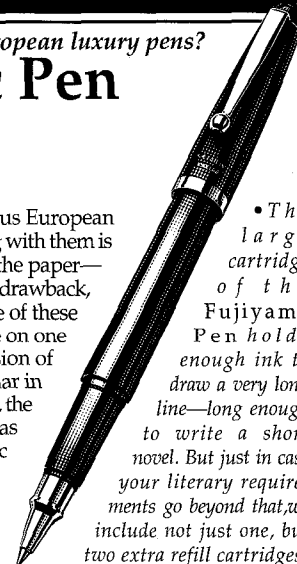
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rationalist. Victorian Platonism put the good in place of God. This good was an invisible order behind the world of appearances. It could be reached, says Plato in *The Republic*, but only by philosophical thought. Inheriting this, Woolf changes all the numbers: like her father, she did not believe in God. Like the Platonist, she sees a real world behind the apparent world. But it is not the form of the Good. It is intrinsic, indescribable. And most importantly, it cannot be reached through philosophical reasoning, but only lunged at every so often by that faculty that Plato somewhat despised: the imagination.

So Woolf saw beyond art—and not only in moments of mental brokenness, but in the very midst of that art. Her greatest fiction is moved by the faith that to have visions is to see beyond aesthetic vision. At the end of *The Waves*, Bernard casts off “this veil of being,” and asks: “What does the central shadow hold? Something? Nothing? I do not know.” Importantly, he feels that he has pierced a silent world without the protection of art or language, “a new world . . . without shelter of phrases.” At the end of *To the Lighthouse*, Lily Briscoe sits at her easel, painting her “attempt at something.” Her attempt at something is more than the attempt to paint a picture. The picture is irrelevant. She reflects that her painting will be hung in an attic or even destroyed.

Lily’s attempt is to grasp time, to restore a moment of the present even as it creepingly ages before her. This is not only an aesthetic exertion. That would be tautological: it is art which has gathered this moment, so it would be weak to say that the meaning of this moment is art. No, what is so moving in this novel is the spreading apprehension that the very vagueness of the invisible “something” that we are all seeking through and beyond the senses makes it mystical, pushes it beyond aesthetic form. The indefinability of the “something” is what goads Woolf’s art into art; but the indefinability is also what exhausts that art. This contradictory belief, that truth can be looked for but truth cannot be seen, and that art is the greatest way of giving form to this contradiction, is what moves us. At her best Woolf is not an “impressionist,” because she has a metaphysician’s interest in impressions. Her work is full of the sense that art is an “incessant unmethodical pacing” around meaning rather than toward it, and that this continuous circling is art’s straightest metaphysical path. It is all art can do, and it is everything art can do. And finally, the meaning moves silently on, partially palpable, giving only occasional proof of itself, always hiding its larger invisibilities. •

The Chrysalis Years

By JOSEPH RYKWERT

Le Corbusier’s Formative Years

by H. Allen Brooks

(University of Chicago Press, 514 pp., \$65)

The Final Testament of Père Corbu

by Le Corbusier

translated and interpreted by Ivan Zaknić

(Yale University Press, 180 pp., \$25)

When I was young and callow, an English publisher sent me to Le Corbusier’s office in the Rue de Sèvres, in Paris. I was to entice the master to part with photographs or drawings of his work before 1914, to illustrate a forthcoming English version of Maximilien Gauthier’s monograph on him that had been published in Paris nearly ten years earlier, in 1944. That Corbusier was reluctant to discuss his early work was well known, even to me—but I was not prepared for his sharp, even angry dismissal of the enterprise.

I tried to recover the situation by suggesting naïvely that I could myself collect material at Chaux-de-Fonds, his birthplace in the Jura. It was famous for its watch-making workshops; and it was also the birthplace of an exact contemporary, the distinguished and now unjustly neglected writer Blaise Cendrars. Corbusier threatened to sue if I did anything of the kind. My rather dismayed look must have dampened his anger a little. All those buildings, he explained, were not the work of Le Corbusier, they were the creations of Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, who was quite a different person. People might get the wrong idea if they were published under his other name. As he put it, “il ne faut pas confondre les idées aux gens.”

In his new book, H. Allen Brooks has carefully traced the rather tortuous way in which that introspective, vulnerable, insecure art student Charles-Edouard Jeanneret-Gris, of Chaux-de-Fonds in Switzerland, the son of a designer and maker of enamel watch-dials, gradually transformed himself into the overbearing and single-minded Parisian called Le Corbusier, who dominated the architecture of the world for several decades. Brooks has found the documentary evidence for every step in this process:

school grades, early sketches, accounts of the Jeanneret family’s financial problems, and so on; and he has interviewed the teachers and familiars who helped Charles-Edouard to formulate his ideas. He has also interviewed surviving witnesses from that time, many of whom have since died. He has visited and photographed not only Jeanneret’s early buildings, but also those in which he lived or which influenced him.

Corbusier’s justified fame as the great architect of the century has eclipsed his other activities, and it is easy to forget that the decision to become an architect was gradual, and in a sense not his own. As Brooks recounts, in his late teens defective eyesight made it difficult for Charles-Edouard to follow his father as an engraver. His teacher at the Chaux-de-Fonds Art School and first mentor Charles L’Eplattenier, involved him in design and decorating enterprises and in the formation of a kind of post-graduate department that accepted several real commissions, to which Corbusier remained loyal for several years. The earliest project—it was from 1910—that he allowed into the seven volumes of his *Oeuvres Complètes* was for a building to house its ateliers.

His commitment to architecture was always mitigated by other concerns. His mother was a semi-professional musician while his older brother, trained as a composer and violinist, became a teacher of the Dalcroze method—barefoot, neo antique dancing (the arms moving to melody, the feet to rhythm) from which Isadora Duncan developed her dance forms—in which Charles-Edouard also became interested. He continued to paint throughout his life: in the post-war period he devoted half his working day every day, to it, and suffered because of its neglect by critics. Of course, he wrote passionately, voluminously, constantly

the French identity card that he carried stated his profession as *homme de lettres*.

Having pushed young Jeanneret toward architecture, L'Eplattenier also procured him the commission to design his first house in 1906; a very ornate, half-timbered essay in the Swiss-chalet style (then called the "Jura" style), with grafito-decorated walls and steep overhanging timber roofs, like several more he was to design before a decisive change of manner in 1910-11. In 1907, L'Eplattenier sent young Jeanneret on the first of several study trips, beginning with the conventional one to Italy, where, conventionally, he only looked at medieval art. As he himself wrote home, "Ruskin teaches how to see"—though he did call in at the Venice Biennale, where he found little to admire, not even Rodin's "Thinker."

From Italy he went to Budapest and to Vienna, where he was lackadaisical about visiting the modern architecture he had been sent to examine and attending the art-schools. Instead, he went on working on designs for Chaux and visiting museums, concerts and the opera assiduously. It was a performance of *La Bohème* that made the charm of Paris so vivid. "This damned *Bohème* ... made us believe it was Paris: they made the Parisians more Parisian.... They were very lively Parisians, very much at ease, very alert, like the Viennese know how to do it. And so ... we said to each other, 'off to Paris.' That was it. Three days later we were on the train for Paris."

Corbusier recorded these words on a high-fidelity disk in May 1965, though it (and a companion disk) were not released until after his death a few months later. I cite it from Ivan Zaknić's *The Final Testament of Père Corbu*, which is as much an epilogue to Corbusier's biography as Allen Brooks's book is a prologue. It contains the text of the recording I have quoted, as well as the original text of his *Mise au Point*, the pamphlet that Corbusier wrote a few weeks before he died. (The complete text of that pamphlet is not easy to find.)

For all the speed of his departure, he had enjoyed Vienna much more than he would enjoy Munich or Berlin. He had made the acquaintance of Josef Hoffmann, the most successful of the Viennese designer-architects, and had liked him very much personally—though Adolph Loos, with whom he would work closely later, was Hoffmann's avowed enemy. Though Hoffmann made a greater impact as a person than as a designer or a theorist, Corbusier was attached to his memory. Brooks, intent on deconstructing the Corbusier myth, points out that his consistent claim to have spent some months in Hoffmann's office is

more or less a pious fiction, one of several improvements on the biography of Jeanneret that Corbusier found useful to enhance his prestige—though perhaps some of this monkeying with dates is more innocent than Brooks would make it seem.

Nor are his changes of opinion quite as surprising. He was 21 during his first Parisian visit in 1908, and he spent much of it in the office of Auguste Perret, which combined a very innovative contracting and engineering practice, specializing in reinforced concrete, with a belief in the permanent value of "classical" principles. Though he was devoted to Gothic art and architecture, he was increasingly coming to think of cathedrals as models of rational building. (But his study of Nôtre Dame, which he recorded in his first surviving notebook, is entirely concerned with visual effects: details of construction, effects of the stained glass.) Perret, who gave him a great deal of attention, became his guru, and Corbusier—or rather, Jeanneret—persisted for several decades in a love-hate relationship with him. It was Perret who urged him to look at Versailles and to study mathematics, a subject that he had always found awkward.

Since Corbusier's particular vision was formed on his next visit abroad—a year in Germany in 1910-11—it seems odd that Jeanneret's travels should be so casual and unprepared; and Brooks is revealing here. He started in Munich, where the museums were fine, but most of the designers and architects were in Berlin. He moved to Berlin, and had a chance encounter with Theodor Fischer, a prolific builder and an energetic teacher, who devoted much attention to the theory of proportion, and whose friendly household impressed Jeanneret greatly and brought him in touch with the idea of determining proportion in architectural design geometrically.

Fischer was inspired in part by the researches of Adolf Zeising, who had attempted to establish a "science of beauty" in the 1850s, based on the assumption that there was an instinctive and universal preference for the proportion known as the "golden section," which occurs when a line is cut asymmetrically so that the whole of it is in the same ratio to the larger section as the larger is to the smaller. It is a proportion that has many fascinating numerical and geometrical implications. Zeising's assumption was investigated further by Gustav Fechner, whose researches on the relation between the data of consciousness and the data of the senses led him to formulate the law that "for the intensity of a sensa-

tion to increase in arithmetical progression, the stimulus must increase in geometrical progression." He became the father of "experimental aesthetics." His view that certain forms are "naturally" pleasing was taken over by, among others, Peter Behrens, certainly the best-known architect in Germany at the time of Jeanneret's visit, in whose office he was to work for several months, coinciding briefly with Mies van der Rohe. (Though not, as legend has it, with Walter Gropius, who had already set up on his own.) The Behrens apprenticeship, rather than the one in Perret's studio, moved Jeanneret

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much closer to the architect we know. The search for a scientific basis—or at any rate, a rational basis—for his formal language was to obsess Corbusier throughout his life.

On his first visit to Munich, he met also another mentor, Wilhelm Ritter, the Neufchâtel critic and writer on peasant art. Jeanneret's long trip to the Balkans, Istanbul, and Mount Athos was in part inspired by Ritter. The encounter with the Parthenon in Athens was its climax, and was presented by Corbusier as decisive to him. "If the Parthenon stops you in your tracks," he wrote later, "it is because when you see it, your inner chords resound; the axis has been reached ... it is the clearest moment, when a man moved by the noblest thoughts has crystallized them in a plastic language of light and shadow..." He wrote regretfully little about the Acropolis during his

He returned to Chaux-de-Fonds between each of his trips. By 1910 he had a number of new commissions, and the houses that he now designed were quite different. His German heroes, Behrens and his contemporaries, had (as Brooks points out) marked him indelibly. Their plain, geometrically assertive classicism was "rational" in quite a different way from the constructional virtuosity of his Jura chalets. The most impressive house was the one that he designed for the Schwob family, which became the model on which he later demonstrated his formal approach: the ornamental details are severely controlled, the proportions are geometrically worked out, the concrete skeleton frame allows him to create a dramatic internal volume.

Built in 1916-17, the Schwob house was his last work at Chaux before he moved to Paris permanently. There were several semi-industrial enterprises in those three years, before Corbusier emerged fully formed from the Jeanneret chrysalis. In 1920, the Le Corbusier we know is the co-signatory (with the painter Amédée Ozenfant) of the manifesto of Purism, a movement which they both saw as the successor to Cubism, since it vindicated the integrity of the object (especially the

industrially produced object) against the analytical destructiveness of Picasso and Braque; and, Fechner-like, they also maintained that they had the scientific basis for producing works which could stimulate precisely calibrated emotional reactions. The two of them were coeditors, with the poet Paul Dermée (who signed himself "Cartesian-Dadaist") of a brilliant literary and artistic periodical, *L'Esprit Nouveau*. They owed the title to Guillaume Apollinaire, who had just died, and whose heir Dermée considered himself to be.

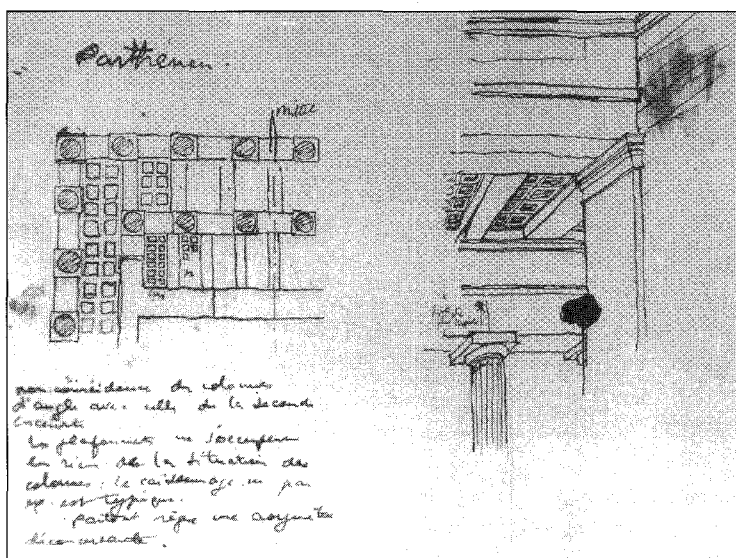
Since the three editors wrote many of the articles themselves, pen-names were an essential subterfuge. Ozenfant used his mother's maiden name, Saugnier. This was not possible for Jeanneret, since his mother's maiden name, Perret, was also that of his mentor, who by then was the best-known "advanced" French

great primary shapes which light shows very well ... everybody is in agreement about that: the child, the savage, the metaphysician ..." This abrupt but fulsome prose cannot be dismissed as "telegraphic," as Brooks does. The abbreviations in Corbusier's credo go to the limit of the intelligible, but they do not cross it. For more than half a century, it has been many an aspiring student's introduction to the essence of architecture.

Le Corbusier was born in 1920, when *L'Esprit Nouveau* was founded, but Jeanneret was already 33. He had always been very close to his family, and continued to be loyal to them and to his home town, in his way. (His brother Albert Jeanneret was the magazine's music-critic.) Blaise Cendrars was a frequent contributor (and occasional literary editor) of *L'Esprit Nouveau*, whose roster told the most brilliant contributors of that brilliant period. Still,

Corbu-Corbeau rather cultivated the image of himself as an outsider.

He often referred to his descent from Albigenian refugees, remnants of the medieval Provençal sect known as the Cathars, the pure ones, who believed in the fundamental evil of the flesh and the fundamental goodness of the spirit—a heresy that had been bloodily put down by the middle of the fourteenth century, three hundred years before Chaux even became an incorporated settlement. Evidence about any connection between the settlement and the refugees is tenuous, but Corbusier's



LE CORBUSIER, DETAIL OF THE PARTHENON, SEPTEMBER 1911

architect. He therefore adapted the name of a maternal grand-uncle, Lecomtesier, which he ennobled by separating the particle, Louis XIV-style. His consequent nickname abbreviated it to Corbu, and he would himself corrupt it to Corbeau—and use the drawing of a crow or raven as a visual signature. It was a reference, too, to Edgar Allan Poe's poem, which was well-known through Baudelaire's prose translation.

As Le Corbusier (sometimes Le Corbusier-Saugnier, implying collaboration with Ozenfant), he signed a number of articles. Slightly modified, these became *Vers une Architecture*. It was the most important piece of architectural polemic or theory of the inter-war years, and a brilliant piece of aphoristic rhetoric: "Architecture is the knowing, precise and splendid play of the forms that are assembled in light. The play of shadow and light declares forms: cubes, cones, spheres, cylinders or pyramids are the

claim has been repeated by his biographers, beginning with Gauthier (the one for whom I was to have chosen illustrations). Brooks refers to it skeptically, and rightly insists that it was fostered to favor the image of Corbu as a heretic and a protester.

It also presented him as a Frenchman returning home, rather than the Swiss immigrant that many considered him to be (he had become a French citizen in 1930); and it promoted him into a man of the Mediterranean. The myth seemed confirmed by an account of his death in 1965 as a suicide, swimming out toward the sun at Cap-Martin. He had a small seaside shack there, where he spent much of the summer and where he did die of a heart-attack. But at 78, and with a weak heart, he knew the risk he was taking, as he did when evading the paramedic who watched his diet to have lunch by himself at his favorite restaurant, Lapèrouse. At the time of his death

he was the world's best-known architect, with work in Asia, Europe and both Americas, and had plans "for at least a hundred years." Zaknić reports a half-jocular conversation before his last swim, which ended with the greeting "à tout à l'heure." Suicide may have been Charles-Edouard's end, but it seems out of character for Corbu.

And yet there was some justice in his appeal to the dualism of the Cathars. For Corbusier thought of himself in such terms. There was a dualism between his devotion to a Supreme Being immanent in nature and its laws and what he considered his "rationalism," the elementary science that he had learned at school and which was reflected in the demands of an active everyday practice. He believed that the two attitudes did not need to be reconciled, that they could be held concurrently. That lesson came from a book that he considered a revelation: *Les Grands Initiés* by Edouard Schuré, a French propagator of Wagner and a prolific writer on esoteric matters, in which he presented such figures as Rama and Krishna, Hermes, Moses, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Plato and Jesus as transmitters of an ancient and secret wisdom. But the book also showed young Jeanneret that the positive demands of the pragmatic and the everyday could coexist with the intuition of a higher and timeless truth.

Corbusier's debt to Schuré has been much discussed, as have many other aspects of the construction of Le Corbusier. Indeed, a vast literature has developed around his work and ideas. But Brooks has provided the first really close account of his early development, and it will not be superseded, if only because so many of his interlocutors have died. And if Brooks is a little censorious about his hero's misguided insensitivity, or about his being "economic with the truth" in his autobiographical musings, he never loses sight of Corbusier's towering stature. Zaknić is the unalloyed admirer, and his book is a wholehearted tribute. Although it is presented as a bilingual version of Corbusier's last and rather melancholy piece of writing, it is much more than that. It includes an eighty-page introduction and many unpublished documents, texts, drawings and photographs: a treasure-trove for Corbusier students and groupies.

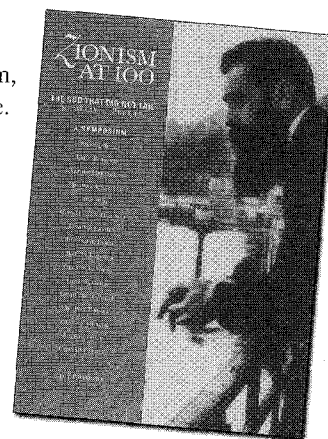
Looking back over his life at its end, Corbusier finally claimed an unbroken unity for Charles-Edouard Jeanneret and his alter-ego Père Corbu, which the conceit of the pseudonym sometimes denied. Perhaps the naïve instinct of my youth was not altogether mistaken.

JOSEPH RYKWERT is Paul Philippe Cret Professor of Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania.

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JERUSALEM DIARIST

Shell-shocked

THREE BLASTS SHOOK THE OFFICE. The floor shuddered, the windows rattled and outside a car alarm began shrieking. The first rule of living in a terror zone is assume it's something else. Otherwise, every sonic boom will make you crazy. I waited for sirens. They began two or three minutes later. This is when the routine of terror begins. I phoned home, spoke into the voice mail: "Attack, downtown. I'm okay; I'm going out. Phone when you come in." I made myself assume my wife wouldn't have brought the kids into town without telling me. You have to hold it together. Downstairs, as I came out, a soldier in black padded gear, M-16 slung over his back, ran down the side street between boutiques and sidewalk cafes. A young couple walked toward me, gripping hands. She cried silently; his face was gaunt and splotchy, stitched together with the thin thread of determination. The next dozen couples, all walking slowly away from the noise—unnaturally, all noise was coming one way—wore the same expressions.

THE BOMBERS HAD BLOWN THEMSELVES up among the after-school teenagers strolling Ben-Yehuda Street 250 yards from my office, but it was hard getting there. At Zion Square, the bottom end of Ben-Yehuda, I walked into the noise—sirens, police bullhorns squawking static, walkie-talkies, immense shouting. A dark-haired girl who looked 15 leaned against the wall of a bank, weeping with her mouth wide open, screaming a friend's name: "Shiri, Shiri." Her boyfriend dove into the crowd, disappeared, returned, plunged back in. Six soldiers trotted past, carrying a teenage boy on a stretcher. The boy looked at me. Upward, toward ground zero, ran paramilitary police, ultra-Orthodox volunteers carrying a wooden stretcher, women in olive drab pulling on rubber gloves. In the piazza just past where police were blocking the crowd, a red pool covered the paving stones. A cameraman climbed a fire truck and began filming, his olive skin gone gray, his face also looking stitched together. He had a job to do. At the entrance to an office building, a woman in a tailored suit poured water into plastic cups and

handed them to cops, her mouth a flat line. She'd found a job. Somehow I got to the square higher up, past the cordoned-off zone. In between was where pieces of body lay, where flesh stuck to the ripped umbrella of a vegetarian restaurant. Next to the bargain shop where I bought my daughter a pencil holder for first grade two days before, zigzags of blood on pavement mapped panicked moves of the wounded the moment after the blasts. Plastic beach buckets, Barbie schoolbags and jagged glass carpeted the street. What if I'd waited to do the school shopping? What if I hadn't put off the friend who wanted to meet for lunch today? Collecting what-ifs is part of the routine. Back at my office, I had voice mail: my wife had come back from the park with the kids and was harvesting quotes from the radio for her newspaper. My 8-year-old son again had the job of watching the baby.

IN ONE WAY, THE ROUTINE has changed. As prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres quickly arrived on the scene of an attack, often greeted by enraged mobs of demonstrators. After a Tel Aviv bus bombing in October 1994, that killed twenty-two people, then-opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu quickly showed up and told TV cameramen, "This is the price of the government's wanton peace policy." With Netanyahu in power, only a few far-rightists protest. It took the prime minister a week to visit the Mahaneh Yehuda market after the recent bombing there. A few days before that attack, he'd bragged on TV about his government's record on terror. Reminded of the Tel Aviv cafe bombing in March, I'm told, he cupped his hand to his ear and said, "And what else?"

THE PALESTINIAN TERROR HAS bankrupted Netanyahu's campaign promise of "Safe Peace." The killers appear unimpressed by his claimed expertise on terrorism. There's no doubt the prime minister is as pained as every Israeli. But in a way, he's like a man collecting the inheritance while mourning a beloved father: torn up, but willing to use the new assets. The day after the bombing, the cabinet voted to postpone the next pullback in the West Bank.

NETANYAHU HAS EFFECTIVELY stopped the Oslo process—returning to the position he'd held until electoral

pressures pushed him to speak moderately. If violent confrontation with the Palestinians is inevitable, he appears to feel, better to stop and face it where you are. Any move on peace only endangers Israel more. Stand still. Theologically, hawks are fatalists: the Arabs are who they are, conflict is destined. For doves, Israel and the Palestinians are sliding toward gun battles because Netanyahu has chosen to believe they must.

THE GOVERNMENT SEES YASIR Arafat's Palestinian Authority as bearing guilt for the bombings because it failed

to crack down on terror groups like Hamas. On the other hand, says Hamas-watcher Dr. Menachem Klein of Bar-Ilan University, the organization has been hurt most by Oslo's key successes. The creation of the Palestinian Authority and Palestinian elections have fragmented Hamas. Measuredly, Shin Bet security service chief Ami Ayalon told the cabinet that, if the Palestinian Authority had

cooperated with Israel, it could have "reduced the chance" of the Ben-Yehuda bombing, or so one newspaper paraphrased him. But Israel's demand that Arafat take drastic action has also given him an asset: no one, apparently including Western governments, talks to the Palestinian Authority about human rights. Home after the bombing, I called Fatma Soboh in Gaza. Her husband, Dr. Fathi Ahmed Soboh, has been jailed for two months, after giving an exam at Gaza's Al-Azhar University in which he asked questions about official corruption. She'd received permission to visit her husband the day I called without explanation, the jailers had turned her away. Even if Arafat won't stop terror, he does lock up dissidents.

THREE DAYS AFTER THE BOMBING a friend and I sat down for lunch at a sidewalk cafe on Ben-Yehuda. The Palestinians call it *sumud*, sticking to the soil. It's a cross between determination and denial. Most of the windows were already fixed, and the veggie restaurant had new umbrellas. As we began walking down to the office, a cop's bullhorn roared, "Move back, clear the street. Someone had reported a suspicious object on the road, and the bomb squad had to check. This time nothing blew up. It was part of the routine.

GERSHOM GORENBERG

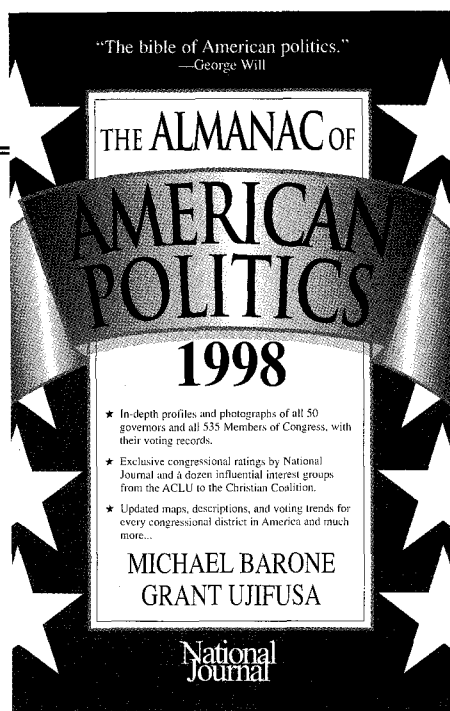


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